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WILLIAM RATHBONE

A MEMOIR

Yours faithfully
W. Rathbone

WILLIAM RATHBONE

A MEMOIR

BY

ELEANOR F. RATHBONE

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PREFACE

It became clear after my father's death, that among his fellow-citizens in Liverpool, his former constituents in Wales, and his fellow-workers and friends everywhere, there were many who would value a record of his life. It is for these that this Memoir is intended. Owing to the number and variety of his activities, I found it impossible to keep the book as short as I wished, without making it either too vaguely general on the one hand, or a mere string of facts and names on the other. But it has been so arranged, that readers interested in any one subject at which he worked will usually find what they want in one chapter, and can leave out as much as they like of the rest.

Apart from the familiar pitfalls, that lie in the path of any one who attempts to write about the life of a very near relation, there have been other difficulties. When my father left London, he destroyed nearly all the papers that had accumulated during his twenty-six years of Parliamentary life. This obliged me to rely, for those years, too much upon newspaper reports and the recollections, of himself and others, written down long after the event. It also aggravated the difficulty—inevitably great

when one was describing work done so closely in conjunction with others — of steering a course between claiming too little and claiming too much. The knowledge of how greatly he would have himself preferred the former extreme could not but influence me, at times perhaps overmuch. But to do what he would have considered justice to those who worked with him, has been impossible in the space at my command.

The shortcomings of the book would have been even greater than they are but for the help of many friends. The Vice-Chancellor of Liverpool University (Mr. A. W. W. Dale) and Mr. A. F. Warr have both found time, amid the great pressure of their own work, to read through a large part of the typed script, and to make many valuable suggestions. Mr. Henry Bonham Carter, Principal Reichel, and Professor MacCunn have also been good enough to read each the portion which treated of work with which they had been intimately connected, and to supply me with interesting notes. Some suggestive notes on my father's political work were given me by Mr. James Bryce. Other friends have lent letters and answered inquiries, and I take this opportunity of thanking them all. The help of my mother and other members of my family has been, of course, even more indispensable.

December 1904.

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CHAPTER I

THE EARLIER WILLIAM RATHBONES OF LIVERPOOL

THE first William Rathbone to settle in Liverpool was the great-great-grandfather of the subject of this Memoir. He was born in 1696, the third son of William Rathbone of Gawsworth, near Macclesfield, and of Martha Vigour his wife. At an unknown date, but certainly before 1730, he left that most picturesque and charming of Cheshire hamlets, and came, as it is believed, to set up a sawmill in Liverpool, being perhaps attracted thither by the recent and rapidly growing prosperity of the town. At the beginning of the eighteenth century the population had been five thousand and odd. By 1710 it had doubled. By 1750 it had doubled again, reaching 20,000. Only at the very end of the previous century had the town attained the dignity of a separate parish church. Before that it was a mere hamlet in the ecclesiastical parish of Walton, served by a small chapel-of-ease, now the Church of St. Nicholas.

The petition put forward by the Corporation in favour of the change gives their own account of the causes of their increasing prosperity, but makes no mention of the chief cause of all—the growth in the cotton manufacture of Lancashire, and the need of a convenient port for the export of "Manchester goods" and the import of raw material and necessaries for the manufacturing population.

THE CASE OF THE CORPORATION OF LIVERPOOL in Relation to a Bill for making a new Church there.

It was formerly a small fishing-town, but many people coming from London in time of the sickness and after the fire, several ingenious men settled in Liverpool, which caused them to trade to the plantations and other places, which occasioned sundry other tradesmen to come and settle there, which hath so enlarged their trade, that from scarce paying the salary of the officers of the Customs, it is now the third port of the trade of England, and pays upwards of £50,000 per annum to the King; and by reason of such increase many new streets are built, and still in building; and many gentlemen's sons of the counties of Lancaster, Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Cheshire, and North Wales, are put apprentices in the town. And there being but one chapel, which doth not contain one-half of our inhabitants in the summer, upon pretence of going to the parish church, which is two long miles, and there being a village in the way, they drink in the said village, by which and otherwise many youth and sundry families

are ruined ; therefore it is hoped the Bill may pass, being to promote the service of God.[1]

In 1730 the town, in spite of its pretensions to rank as "the third port in the kingdom" (London and Bristol being, of course, the first and second), was insignificant in size and singularly wanting in architectural beauty. In the words of a native writer :

The inhabitants lived for the most part in mean and exceedingly narrow, tortuous streets, between the brow of the hill on which the Town Hall now stands and the margin of the river. The houses were chiefly of brick, and without the charms of shape, colour, or carving. There was a quay protected by a sea-wall, and but one completed dock. The old Custom-house stood where now stands the Sailors' Home. Well-to-do merchants were just beginning to build themselves better dwellings in Hanover Street, Church Street, and Duke Street. No highway as yet entered the town. He who would to Liverpool had to go there on horseback or on foot. No carriage could take you nearer to Liverpool than Warrington. The mails went out and came in on horseback, and so late as 1775 one letter-carrier sufficed for the whole correspondence of the town.

The growth in the business of this William Rathbone was not untypical of that of the town generally. Beginning as a timber sawyer, he seems to have become in turn a timber merchant,

[1] Picton's *Memorials of Liverpool*, vol. i. p. 145.

a general commission merchant, a shipowner, and perhaps a shipbuilder. By the middle of the century, the firm which he founded, and of which all his direct successors up to the present day have been members, owned or hired five or six small vessels, which went out under charge of a supercargo, trading chiefly to the West Indies, the Plantations (*i.e.* the Southern States of America), and the Baltic. They took cargoes of salt or of West Indian produce to Norway and Sweden, and returned with freights of timber. They also shipped mahogany from the West Indies. They carried earthenware and linen from Dungannon to Philadelphia, and brought thence tobacco, wheat, rye, and rice. In turning over the early letter-books of the firm, one realises how tiny was the volume of trade in those days compared with our own, even in "the third port of the trade of England," and how many the difficulties it had to contend with, from laws, protective and retaliatory, as well as from imperfect means of communication, and from the acts of God and of the King's enemies. Cargoes had to wait for weeks or months for a convoy, and to ensure against privateers. Timber from the Baltic had to be paid for through Amsterdam, there being, as the letter-books show, no exchange between the North of Europe and Great Britain except through Amsterdam, then the financial

centre of Europe. A passenger desiring in August to go to Norway was obliged to travel to London on horseback, "as it was not expected that a ship would sail for Norway from Liverpool that year." Moneys owed in Chester or Manchester could not be collected until some one chanced to be coming thence to Liverpool.

This William Rathbone died in 1746, or, as a contemporary notice words it, "was removed from this probationary life by a fever in the fiftieth year of his age." The same notice explains that he had been a member of the Established Church until about the year 1730, when he was convinced of Friends' principles, and was received into unity with their Society, of which he died an upright, faithful member, leaving a testimony in the hearts of many survivors that his life had corresponded with his holy profession. His father, William Rathbone of Gawsworth, "received the truth" soon after his son.

The third bearer of the name was a very typical Quaker merchant of the eighteenth century. There are several descriptions of him in contemporary letters and memoirs, but an extract from one of them will suffice. It is from the pen of Dr. Rutter, a well-known Liverpool physician.

My dear Cousin—In compliance with thy request that I would state in writing what I mentioned to thee

in conversation respecting the character of thy grandfather, William Rathbone, I sit down with great pleasure to the task. Although it is now about forty-six years since he died, my recollection of his person, his character, and his manners, is as vivid as if I had seen him only yesterday. . . .

No human being whom I have ever yet met with has left upon my mind so strong an impression of his worth. In business he was very diligent and active; yet the concerns of business disturbed him not; and when at the close of the day he sat down with his family, there was such calmness, such composure in his aspect and demeanour, that it was almost impossible for those who were near him not to feel the full influence of it. Still more strongly have I felt this, when I have seen him on a summer's evening sitting alone near the riverside, in a state of contemplation; so calm, so mild, so tranquil, I seemed as if I had been in the presence of a being not of this world, to the feverish, selfish, and restless spirit of which his own state of mind presented so striking a contrast. To me his kindness was constant and uniform. Soon after I settled here he said to me one day: "Now, in this large and dangerous town, thou mayest probably often be invited into company which may be neither profitable nor agreeable to thee. In all such cases thou hast a ready excuse. Thou art always engaged to me." I felt deeply the kindness of the motives from which this hint proceeded, and I often afterwards availed myself of it. In all his conduct there never appeared anything which bore the slightest approach to selfishness; there were no littlenesses, no fretfulness or impatience. There was in all his proceedings a moral dignity and greatness, which it was

Thy Affectionate Father
Wm Rathbone

easy to perceive, but it is difficult to convey an adequate conception of it to another.

. . . . . .

It is evident from the record of his business transactions that the placid exterior here described hid a considerable fund of worldly shrewdness and energy. It must be admitted that his letters as well as the expression recorded in his portrait give more evidence of what the writer elsewhere calls the "uncommon firmness and dignity of his conduct," than of the mild and contemplative personality remaining in Dr. Rutter's memory after forty years. Two of his sayings which have come down to his descendants are fair specimens of the vein of humour that belongs to his type.

He used to tell how when he was just grown up, an old Quaker lady, an elder in the Society, said to him, "William, thou art a man now. Thou wilt be thinking of taking a wife. Now, do thou look out for a wife with a natural good-temper. Religion comes and goes, but a natural good-temper is there always."

Another time he had lent his horse to a friend to attend the Quarterly Meeting in Shropshire. When it was brought home, the lender asked, "Sam, did'st thou see my horse fed?" "No," was the reply, "I told the man to feed him, and I paid him for feeding him, but I did not see him do it." "Ah," said the old Quaker, "thou shouldst

have seen it done. Remember, Sam, men are saved by faith in the next world, but by the want of it in this."

He became in his old age an ardent Abolitionist, and when in 1788 a branch of the Society for the Abolition of the African Slave Trade was started in Liverpool, he and his son were among the first eighteen members. He supplied the Rev. Thomas Clarkson with copies of the muster-rolls of Guinea-men (as the slave-ships were called) from the Custom-house of Liverpool. The revelations of the mortality among the sailors on the ships went far to explode the argument used by the supporters of the trade, that it was a "nursery for British seamen." In Clarkson's book on the *Abolition of the African Slave Trade*, he says :

I went round accordingly and took leave of my friends. The last of these was William Rathbone, and I have to regret that it was also the last time I ever saw him. Independently of the gratitude I owed him for assisting me in this great cause, I respected him highly as a man. He possessed a fine understanding with a solid judgment. He was a person of extraordinary simplicity of manners. Though he lived in a state of pecuniary independence, he gave an example of great temperance, as well as of great humility of mind. But however humble he appeared, he had always the courage to dare to do that which was right, however it might resist the customs or the prejudices of men. In his own line of trade, which was that of a timber merchant on an extensive scale, he

would not allow any article to be sold for the use of a slave-ship, and he always refused those who applied to him for materials for such purposes. But it is evident that it was his intention, if he had lived, to bear his testimony still more publicly upon this subject; for an advertisement, stating the ground of his refusal to furnish anything for this traffic upon Christian principles, with a memorandum for two advertisements in the Liverpool papers, was found among his papers at his decease.[1]

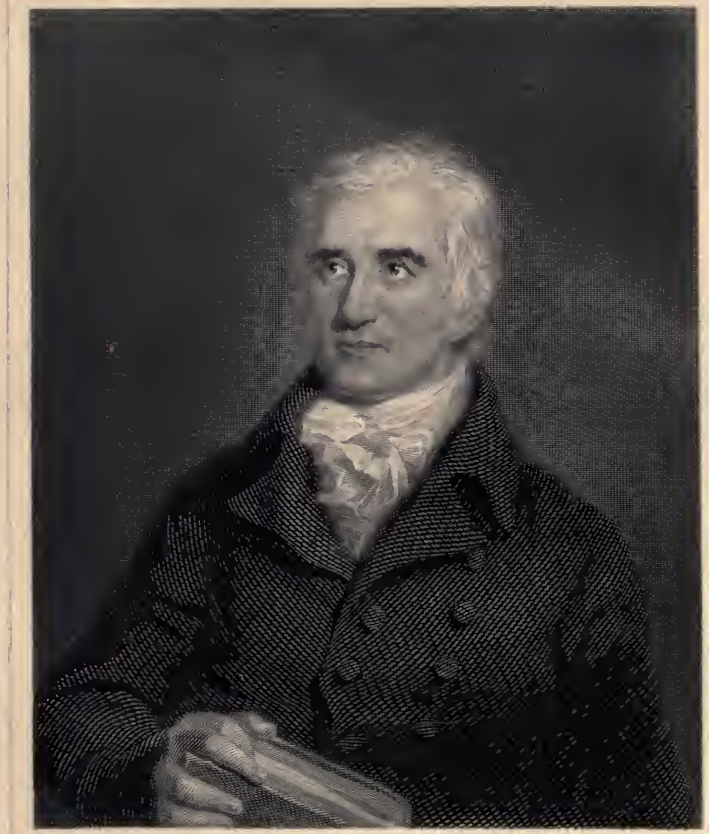
By this time the Slave Trade was regarded in Liverpool as the mainspring of the prosperity of the port. It was a common prophecy that if the Abolitionists succeeded in their agitation, the grass would soon grow in the streets of the town. Most of the wealthiest citizens and those of the highest repute were making their fortunes out of "black ivory." It was no wonder that the small handful of men who denounced the trade were bitterly unpopular and were not unfrequently the objects of mob violence.

The third William Rathbone died in 1789. His son and successor took a more prominent part in public affairs and had greater ability to give effect to his views. On slavery his opinions were those of his father, and like his father he seems to have been noted for the "simplicity of his manners." But in most respects the two men belonged to very different types. The son was too essenti-

[1] Vol. i. pp. 413, 414.

ally a fighter to be at home in the Society of Friends, from which he was, in fact, expelled in middle age. He was a man of ardent and impassioned, yet laborious and painstaking temperament; a man born to belong to minorities and to champion lost causes. He had an eager thirst for knowledge. Though he left school at sixteen or seventeen to go into his father's office, and though office hours in those days were often long and late, he found time to acquire a good working knowledge of French, Latin, and Greek, and to keep himself well acquainted with contemporary thought in politics, economics, theology, and philosophy as represented by the Scottish school. Constant allusions in his letters show that he looked forward with as much eagerness to an expected new volume by Dugald Stewart, or Godwin, or his friend Roscoe, as his less strenuous contemporaries were soon to display over a forthcoming novel by the author of *Waverley*. Yet his appetite for knowledge was evidently not that of a book-worm, but of a man who, as he said of himself, loved the world, and to whom everything that threw light on the great permanent concerns of humanity was of interest. Absorbed as he was in public affairs, he did not neglect his own, for while in his hands the business of his firm flourished greatly. Mr. Thomas Thornely of Liverpool, who had been an apprentice in his office, told his grandson many

WILLIAM RATHBONE (1757–1809).
Grandfather of the subject of this Memoir.



Engraved by Edw. Smith, from a Picture by J. Allen.

William Rathbone.

years afterwards that while he was quite a young man he had reorganised the American trade with Liverpool, and that, while he was in the office, the firm had sometimes as many as twenty or twenty-five ships consigned to it in dock at the same time.

In 1784 his firm imported the first consignment of American cotton ever landed in England. It came in eight bales and three barrels. The navigation laws then decreed that produce imported into England must be carried either in English bottoms or in those of the country whence the produce came; and as this cotton came in an American ship, the Custom-house officers seized it, saying that no cotton was grown in America. It was soon released, but did not easily find a purchaser, being of a longer staple than the cotton then in use. Such was the humble beginning of a trade destined to give to Liverpool all, and far more than all, the prosperity she was soon to lose by the prohibition of her sinister traffic in men.

In 1786 William Rathbone married Hannah Mary Reynolds, only daughter of Richard Reynolds of Bristol, known in his native city as the Philanthropist. Reynolds was a partner in the ironworks at Coalbrookdale, in Shropshire, one of the greatest industrial concerns then in the country. He was a Quaker and a man of great piety and benevolence. He spent the greater part

of his large fortune on public objects (much of it in releasing poor and respectable debtors from jail), and is said to have been the author of the saying, "Every man should be his own executor."

In 1787, on the birth of William Rathbone's eldest son, he being a delicate child who needed country air, his father bought Greenbank, then a farm-house, three miles from the edge of the town in which it is now almost engulfed. Here they continued to live during the greater part of the year, moving for the winter months into Liverpool.

William Rathbone was fond of hospitality, and had many friends among men like-minded with himself in matters of politics, or religion, or both. In Liverpool the party of Reform, or, as they called themselves, the Friends of Freedom, were then as always in a minority, and the consciousness of this drew them the closer together. Comparatively few as they were, there were several men among them, now almost forgotten, who had then a considerable renown beyond their native Liverpool, and who attracted thither visitors to whom the commercial greatness of the city was as nought. The unquestioned leader among them was Roscoe, the historian of Pope Leo the Tenth and of Lorenzo de Medici. Roscoe's literary reputation has not worn well, but in its own day it was very great. His

contemporaries freely compared him, as an historian, to Gibbon, and as a poet to whichever of the really great names of the day chanced to be most in fashion. Whatever may be thought of their judgment, it was at least sincere, for Roscoe had in the beginning nothing but his talents and his personal qualities to commend him to Fame. His father was the owner of a small public-house, standing where the Adelphi Hotel now stands, and of a market-garden, which stretched up the slopes of Mount Pleasant. The boy's early occupation was carrying his father's vegetables on his head to market; afterwards he became an attorney, and much later in life a banker. In addition to his work as an historian, poet, and politician, he was the first and greatest patron of the Fine Arts in Liverpool, and the city owes him many of its institutions.

Another of the Friends of Freedom and of William Rathbone's intimates was Dr. James Currie, the biographer of Burns, and the author of the once famous open letter to Mr. Pitt, signed Jasper Wilson, protesting against the French war of 1793.

Yet another was Edward Rushton, formerly mate of a slaving-ship, afterwards one of the bitterest opponents of the trade, and a poet of some celebrity, who exercised his Muse chiefly in the cause of Abolition.

Dr. Shepherd was the squib-writer of the party, and one of its best speakers. He kept a boys' school at Gateacre, which was well-known among the Nonconformist gentry of the northern counties; and, like Roscoe, he wrote about Italian mediæval history. He and another intimate friend, the Rev. John Yates, were both ministers of Unitarian chapels.

Outside Liverpool, Wedgwood the potter, John Dalton the chemist,[1] the Darbys of Coalbrookdale, and Abraham Shackleton the Irish Quaker, whose father was Edmund Burke's schoolmaster, were among William Rathbone's friends.

He was a copious letter-writer, and with some of these and other friends he kept up an active correspondence, chiefly on the two subjects of religion and politics, in which it is clear his real self lived and moved and had its being. In politics he was what would be called in the England of to-day a thorough-going Radical and Little Englander. Free Trade and a consistent

[1] In the Life of John Dalton there is a letter which gives a lively picture of the free social intercourse between these Liverpool "Reformers." One wonders in reading it how busy men of strenuous spirit found time to pay each other so many and such lengthy visits. "The etiquette in Liverpool," he says, *à propos* of a dinner at Greenbank, "is to sit down to dinner a little after three; as soon as the cloth is drawn, in winter, candles are brought in; when the bottle has gone round about half an hour, the ladies retire; the gentlemen remain till a servant informs them tea is ready, when all meet together again in the tea-room, where they remain till they are informed supper is on the table."

policy of non-interference abroad ; at home—universal suffrage, the ballot, the reform of the Poor Law, perfect liberty of speech, unchecked development of trade,—these were some of the articles of his creed. He had the magnificent faith of the Liberals of his day in Reason and in first principles, and the wisdom and justice of these reforms were to him less a matter of opinion than a necessary truth. That they did not find universal acceptance, even among the oppressed mass of the people who would most surely profit by them, was an anomaly he could scarcely explain, except upon the supposition of a national depravity. Upon the theme of religion he brought to bear the same courageous rationalism. It compelled him to let go much that his father had held dear, but it does not seem to have impaired at all his devotional piety, or his dependence upon the two beliefs which he held to be the essence of religion—his belief in the providence of God and the immortality of man. A few extracts from the mass of his correspondence will serve to show a little more fully than this brief description his views upon these two subjects of politics and religion. They are all taken from his letters to one of his principal correspondents, Mr. Dugald Bannatyne of Glasgow.

The first letter I give was written a fortnight after the execution of Louis XVI. and a week

before the declaration of war with France. The war was enthusiastically welcomed by the great majority of Liverpool citizens, and as bitterly denounced by the small band of Reformers. They opposed it chiefly upon the ground of justice, that England had no business to force France to take back a form of government which she had rejected. The war, with all that had led to it, was a cruel disappointment of the hopes they had been cherishing—hopes of what the Revolution was going to do for France and for humanity, and hopes of a long period of peace, economic development, and social and political reforms at home. As the struggle went on year after year, they believed that it must ruin the country. Later events showed them that they had underestimated British resources, and at the same time completed the disillusionment of their faith in France.

LIVERPOOL, *February* 3, 1793.

ESTEEMED FRIEND—I have been much longer than I intended in acknowledging the receipt of two acceptable letters from thee, but I have felt less inducement to write from the unhappy state of things which renders the present disgusting and the future almost hopeless. I hope and trust, however, that matters are more favourable with you and in Ireland than in this kingdom, for I confess my politics are taking a turn which I once little expected; and the scenes which are passing in England, as well indeed as some of those which have been acted

in France, lead me to think less and to hope less of the dignity of Human Nature and of the quantum of Virtue in individuals than I have hitherto done or would now wish to do. I have hitherto hoped much from a reform of the corruptions of Government, and attributed more of the vice and profligacy of the lower classes to the want of this reform than I fear is consistent with justice. In short, my friend, I begin to think that the Government of England is as good as the People deserve, and from late symptoms it certainly appears that it is as good as the majority wish it; and if this really be the case we Reformers cannot consistently wish more than to enlighten our fellow-creatures, as one step towards Reform, for before this be done the reform itself ought not to be wished for, if Government is only the organ of a majority of the People's will. That interest should influence those who are interested in the perpetuation of abuses, and that a cringing spirit should possess those who live near the vortex of a Court, is not matter of much surprise; but that those who pay many taxes should voluntarily promote measures by which they are to be continued and increased; that those who have not the elective suffrage should prefer the degradation of being without it; that Englishmen should wilfully surrender the Liberty of the Press, become spies on each other's conduct, and submit to become agents in restraining even the Freedom of Speech; that the *great mass* of the people should willingly endure the injustice and oppression of the *few*, and the middle ranks be able to delude those below them; that a Nation exulting in its own freedom should be influenced to calumniate the French for obtaining theirs, and finally to sanction a war against them without even the pretext of injuries

received;—these, I fear, are symptoms of a *national depravity*, and do not wholly originate in the corruptions of Government. I ask myself, if the right of suffrage were (as I think it ought to be) universal, would it at this time make the Government more the organ of the Nation's will than it already is? If it would not, the evils we now suffer are to be attributed to the ignorance, the prejudice, and perhaps the luxury and riches of individuals, and would not be removed by political Reform, though I still hope this would help to lessen them. Our most effectual Reformer must, I fear, be a national Calamity, and till then I despair of much being done either politically or individually as Citizens. I am almost afraid I may be misunderstood in what I have said when I consider how little I am known to my friend, but I hope this will not be the case, though I ought not perhaps to have entered on the subject without having time to make myself more clearly understood.

I sent thee a few days since by one of the Greenock traders a small parcel containing a few tracts. The *Life of Isaac Jenkins* was written by a friend of mine in Shropshire, and I think is likely to do good to the lower classes. I wish it had occurred to me to send the Duke of Richmond's letter to Colonel Sharman. It contains the idea I alluded to about a reform in the *mode of voting*. At present the plan for doing this would have some difficulties, but they might be assisted—on the plan of Universal Suffrage and the elections through the kingdom being on one day and at the same hour, the mode would be the easiest imaginable. I have some ideas about the reform in this respect under the present system, such as increasing the number of Returning Officers to shorten the time of contested elections, voting by Ballot, shut-

ting up public-houses, or taking away the licence on complaint of intoxication, a more serious oath on the part of Candidates, etc. etc.; but I think it is clear that no reform in the mode of voting will be brought about till a reform in the qualifications of Electors is also effected, and then the business of the former will be abundantly simplified. I hope, however, we shall surely have some specimens in this way, with you and in Ireland, and they will serve as experiments how far our theories are reducible to Practice in the reform of old Governments, for with respect to new the whole business is done in America; and so much has had a pretty fair trial in France.

Speaking of France leads to the late melancholy event there. I think the French showed want of Magnanimity at least, possibly of Justice, and certainly were informal in their proceedings about the King. It has hurt their cause greatly here, and, though improperly, yet the business of Reform in England is implicated with it, and is become still more unpopular in these parts. At present no good can be done by introducing the subject, and we are therefore quiet, and glad that the town is preserved in peace, for with respect to party spirit I believe we are better off than most other places. Indeed there seems a general abhorrence of war, yet I don't think our Merchants will have the courage to send up an address to Government against it.

WILLIAM RATHBONE.

GREENBANK, *January* 8, 1797.

. . . I wish him (Roscoe) to give us a pamphlet showing the folly and impolicy of our making foreign conquests, or even retaining any foreign possessions of

any kind. With the right to trade to all Countries on an equal footing with any other Nation, what can we have to expect for from the government [*i.e.* the conquest] of any of them but the support of that patronage and the constant temptation to those wars by which we are likely to be overwhelmed. And instead of trucking with the French for the restoration of *this* island and the possession of *the other*, how much more to the point it would be to say, Let us unite in making them *all* independent of us and of each other, and with them form a mutual Guarantee for the independent right of each to regulate its own internal Concerns and to have a free Trade to all the world besides. I have always hoped the present contest would lead to this, and if it does I should be almost induced to think the purchase worth the price, great beyond all calculation as the latter must be allowed to be. . . . W. R.

March 26, 1799.

. . . . . .

There is a report in circulation here, that a phenomenon no less extraordinary than that of David Hume's going twice a day to *Church* with his *Bible under his arm*, is now to be seen at Edinburgh every Sunday, and that this orthodox Philosopher hath applied to several of the Heads of the College to withdraw their names from the list of members of the Speculative Society, which is represented as an association of Atheists and Jacobins; that some of these members have called the Author of such report and proceedings to account, but that the charge was evaded by him with much subterfuge and meanness. I would hope, for the credit of a name that I always wish to respect, that this report is not true, and

that purposes of worldly interest and preferment would not in such a Character lead to a conduct so justly degrading. By the way, I should *write* with caution on this and all other subjects, for who *now* knows by whom his letters are to be read, and especially those between Liverpool and Glasgow, now that the secret Committee have denounced both places as the residence of Traitors and Conspirators. . . . W. R.

HARROWGATE, *July* 9, 1799.

. . . . . .

How enormous have been all our political Speculations, and how different is the present state of things from what in the earlier, or even in the more advanced periods of the War, any of us would have predicted! Who could have thought that such expedients as those the Minister hath from time to time adopted, could have not only kept him up so long, but exalted him beyond his former popularity; and that a Government avowedly supported by Corruption and encroaching so rapidly upon the Liberty and Property of its subjects, should still be not merely the most popular, but perhaps the most truly free and respectable of any now existing; and this, too, after the theories of Liberty have had so fair a trial both in America and France? How humiliating is this reflection, and what is there now in Politics with which a virtuous man would wish to connect himself? We have thought the measures of administration wrong in point of *Morality*—that they were at variance with the unchangeable principles of justice and the regard due to the essential Rights of Man. On these grounds I trust we shall *always differ* from him [Pitt]; for I own

I have no wish to survive my attachment to my code of Morality, however I may change my opinion respecting political measures. But we have also thought the Minister wrong in point of the *Expediency* of his measures. On the great scale he will probably prove so still. But with respect to the intermediate links, he has certainly judged more prudently than we conceived; for I do think that something more than the Success of Accident should be allowed him; and though we may not give him credit for all his flourishing reports of our prosperity, finances, etc., yet unquestionably the War hath proved less ruinous, in this respect, than most either of its friends or opposers had predicted. Yet, should this apprehended prosperity continue and even increase, what are we likely to gain from it whilst that high spirit of independence which made our Fathers jealous of *all* encroachments upon their Liberty is sunk and lost, and we are now no longer jealous of *that* branch of the Constitution which most excited their vigilance, but, instead thereof, are fearful only of *each other*—and whilst we have lost all sympathy with the wrongs, the sufferings, and the oppressions, not only of any other Nation, but of our Brethren at home, and peculiarly so with ill-fated, oppressed, and unhappy Ireland. . . .

November 30, 1799.

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What a wonderful Revolution indeed hath taken place in France, and when or in what form of Government will the long and sorely agitated state of that country settle? I own I have for some time feared, and do it not the less for this event, that the experience of

France, like that of America, will not realise our theories of liberty; and that previously to our study of Governments, or at least to our *acting* upon the lessons we have learned, we must apply more closely to the study of human nature, and consider man as he is, rather than as we conceive him to be, or likely to become by any change in government or in other external affairs. I don't mean, however, that we are to suppose him incapable of improvement, but that we are not to look for *sudden* or *rapid* improvement, and that we must at times be prepared for even retrograde steps towards folly, infatuation, and profligacy.

I don't yet know what to make of Buonaparte's conduct. I am so strongly impressed in his favour that I cannot lightly give him up. But, giving him credit for the soundest judgment and purest intentions, will not the obvious tendency of his conduct be to put France under a military Government? and whilst he is at the helm this may prove the best thing that can be done for her, and she may even enjoy great freedom and happiness. I hope and still believe this would be the case under *his* Presidency, but who is to succeed him? And is it not melancholy that the fate of more than twenty millions should thus be dependent on the personal character of one man? How nearly will this be allied to the old Despotism of France; though there are points, I yet trust, in which it is morally impossible for this resemblance to hold. But if such, however, be the present tendency of things, where or when are all our fine theories of liberty to be realised? Shall I not be thought in danger of Apostasy for such sentiments as these? I really am, however, uncorrupted at present; at least I have received neither place nor pension. . . .

January 2, 1800.

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One would think, that long before Buonaparte's return from Egypt enough had been done to show the world that he was no common character, yet how lightly were his talents estimated by the Ministerialists at the last opening of Parliament! Now, however, they are wonderfully come about. They hesitate not to admit Talents, and they are prepared to think there may even be Integrity; and gladly would they rejoice to see any way of opening an intercourse between him and their Idol, but the haughty language and temper of Pitt seem to preclude much hope of this. His adherents, however, appear to me fast preparing to leave him, and if Buonaparte pursues his present truly illustrious career, I think he will soon cease to be the object of abuse with the Alarmists Surely he will not disappoint our fond hopes and prove otherwise than great and virtuous, superior to the temptations of power and ambition, and using all the uncommon advantages of his situation and the peculiar circumstances of the times only for the good of mankind. Never was there a finer opportunity for a great Character to attract the notice of mankind. Never has there been a period on which History will be compelled to dwell longer than the close of the last and the opening of the succeeding Century; and amongst the number of characters and events which it will be compelled to hold up to the execration and terror of succeeding times, one cannot help wishing that there may be at least one character which Virtue may claim as her favourite, and Patriotism, Science, and the Arts hold up to the admiration and imitation of others. . . .

April 1795.

My dear Friend— . . . I shall be very glad to know thy opinion of Paley's book. When men alike appeal to the decisions of *Reason* and admit that the Evidences of Christianity are to be examined in exactly the same manner as any other system consisting of facts and doctrine, it is desirable that those who differ from us, and may possibly prove ultimately to be in the right, should know that if we are mistaken it is not because we appeal to any Laws of Evidence different from those which they admit, but because the same evidence produces a different effect on different minds. For my own part, I consider Christianity as of all subjects the most proper for a strictly rigorous and rational examination. Its pretensions are high, and its evidences should therefore be strong. But *no evidence* could be sufficiently strong to establish doctrines which are opposed to the genuine deductions of Reason; and of this class I consider the doctrines of the Trinity, Atonement, etc., which I fully believe are as destitute of support from Scripture as they are from Reason. The important doctrine of Christianity I conceive to be that of a *Future State* which, though probable from deductions of Reason, can yet (from the nature of the case) be made certain only by the evidence of a Revelation; and its importance to the happiness of Mankind appears to me sufficient to justify the probability of so very extraordinary an interference on the part of the Deity as that certainly is which Christians contend for when they assert the Miracles performed by Jesus Christ. I think Paley has stated this with great ability and an uncommon share of candour. Difficulties doubtless still attach to the subject,

but I think these were less to the Christian than to the Unbeliever; and we shall all admit that on this subject, as well as, and as much as on any other, it is not unreasonable to expect the discussion to be taken up by minds who are equally free from the bias to Credulity or to Scepticism, and upon whom the rational Laws of Evidence will have their due effect.

I own I think much harm has been done to the cause of Christianity from representing its evidences as of so strong and imposing a nature as to be absolutely irresistible; whereas it appears to me that this entirely depends on the mind of the inquirer being previously accustomed by exercise and habit to demand not the highest possible evidence (for this I do not think Christianity exhibits), but only such a balance of probability as respecting facts, or of presumptive truth as respecting Doctrine, as should be sufficient to secure assent on the grounds of rational evidence. As, however, I hope to hear thou hast read Paley, I will not attempt to say what will be found so much better stated by him. I am sure the rejection of this System by candid minds after mature examination will not subject them to the disapprobation of God, nor should it excite any diminution of esteem in the minds of good men. Perhaps I should not be justified in saying that I have not made up my own mind on this subject, yet I think I am still capable of listening to and of considering any difficulties or objections attending it. I confess I am glad to find that these do not shake my own belief, by which I mean that they do not produce that wavering and indecision which on such a subject would to me be peculiarly painful and undesirable. For if I were to reject the system myself, I think I should believe it right to give my reasons for doing so to my children,

when they become of proper age; and though I hope I would be satisfied either with the decided acceptance or rejection of the system, yet I am sure I should be unhappy to be in doubt between both. If I were convinced its pretensions were false, it would be what I already believe of Mahometanism, and would equally justify me in rejecting it. But if I thought there were *some* grounds for admitting its pretensions, I own I could scarcely forbear repining at the Supreme Being that these grounds, when fairly and fully discussed, should not be sufficient to gain my firm belief, not only that it was in reality a Revelation from Him, but also that it was in all respects worthy of Him. . . .

It is not surprising that a man who held the views set forth in these extracts, and who practised little economy in expressing them, incurred much odium among his fellow-citizens, and came into sharp conflict with the authorities of his religious denomination. When to the offence of opposing the slave trade, he added that of denouncing the war, he became for a time so unpopular with his well-to-do neighbours that a physician attending an illness in the family, asked leave to pay his visits after nightfall, explaining candidly that it would injure his practice for his carriage to be seen standing at Mr. William Rathbone's door. His hair having turned prematurely white, he was nicknamed the hoary traitor. His appearance and address are said to have been very impressive, and this, combined with a reputation for great benevo-

lence, worked in his favour with the lower orders. There is more than one story of his having ridden straight into a mob furiously excited against the Abolitionists and persuaded them quietly to disperse. An old Scotch merchant, little given to eulogy, who had known him as a youth, described him to his grandson as the most convincing speaker he had ever heard. There was, he said, no attempt at oratory in his speaking, but it had the persuasiveness which is the fruit of intense convictions and a clear head.

The immediate cause of his expulsion from the Society of Friends was his publication of a book entitled *A Narrative of Events that have recently taken place in Ireland among the Society called Quakers.* The *Narrative* is a detailed statement of the circumstances under which a number of Irish Friends had been disowned for what were held to be lax views regarding the authority of the Bible and for breaches in Quaker discipline, especially in the matter of marriage with persons not belonging to the body.

These Quakers, who included many of the most earnest and pious members of the Society, had insisted on applying to the teachings of Scripture their doctrine of the inward light, with the result that they found themselves unable to accept as equally inspired all the parts of the Bible. Their special stumbling-block seems to have been not

Genesis, or the question of miracles, but the many acts of treachery and blood-thirstiness recorded in the Old Testament. To minds trained to look upon all violence as wrong, it seemed impossible that these things could have had the divine sanction. Their sense of right and justice equally forbade them to conform strictly to the discipline of the Society in the matter of marriage. This decreed not merely that any one who married outside the Society should be disunited from it, which perhaps was, according to the constitution of the Society, not unreasonable, but also that the same penalty should be extended to any one who attended such a marriage, and that the parents of the offending child should forthwith disown, disinherit, and give up all intercourse with the wedded pair. The Society in England does not appear to have been in the habit of exercising this amount of rigour in its own discipline, but many of its elders resented the condemnation of it implied in William Rathbone's book. Although the book is in form merely a neutral record of fact, they maintained, and an impartial reader of the *Narrative* would probably agree with them, that it was evident that the author shared the heretical opinions of those whose case he was relating. The matter was brought before the Monthly Meeting of Hardshaw, of which he was a member, and in the end a testimony of disunion was brought against him.

It is evident that many of William Rathbone's friends rejoiced at his final severance from a religious communion with which he had long ceased to be really in sympathy, and regretted only the labour and thought he expended on the controversy. But his native earnestness and pertinacity had made it hard for him to give up the hope of arousing the Society to a sense of the tyranny and short-sightedness of much of their discipline.

In this matter, as well as in most of the political affairs in which he took part, his views were in advance of his age; perhaps they were not of a kind to be popular with the majority of any age. Though several of the causes for which he worked triumphed in the end, he did not live to see it, save in the one instance of the abolition of the slave trade.

It is recorded of him that he tried very hard to secure certain reforms in the administration of the Poor Law. At the time he seemed totally unsuccessful, but some years after his death the measures which he had urged were carried into effect, with such good results that when after the introduction of the new Poor Law, the Commissioners visited Liverpool, they found that they had, comparatively speaking, little to do to bring the administration of relief into accordance with the Act.

Perhaps the only political question upon which

William Rathbone ever found himself working cordially with the main body of his fellow-citizens was the question of the opening of the trade to the East to British merchants. In 1772 an active agitation was begun to induce the Government to allow the exclusive Charter of the East India Company to expire. There seemed at first some chance of success, but the reaction against all liberal measures, caused by the excesses of the French Revolution, threw back the question for many years. In 1807 William Rathbone took a leading part in reviving and organising this agitation, which was carried on for some time, but without success. The monopoly flourished until 1833.

In 1806 the Reform party in Liverpool tasted the unaccustomed flavour of success. In a sudden fit of sympathy with liberal principles, or perhaps only because pride in Roscoe's celebrity overcame for the moment the unpopularity of his views, the electors returned him to Parliament at the head of the poll, and thus enabled him, in the capacity of senior member of the greatest slave-port in the kingdom, to vote and speak in the debates which ended in the abolition of the trade. It was no wonder that the Reformers felt themselves — as William Rathbone wrote to a friend — "like a man half awake, who knows not whether it is an unfinished dream or one of the realities of life that presses itself on his recollection." It is true

that, six months later, when Abolition was an accomplished fact and Parliament was dissolved, Roscoe was received on his return to Liverpool by a mob armed with stones, sticks, and knives ; and although he was more fortunate than some of his followers in escaping physical injury, he was left far at the bottom of the poll.

From the beginning of 1807 onwards, public opinion in Liverpool ran high upon the question of the famous Orders in Council. These Orders were the answer of the British Government to the Berlin decree issued by Buonaparte in November 1806, which declared the British Islands in a state of blockade, all British subjects, wherever found, prisoners of war, all British goods lawful prize. The first Order in Council prohibited neutral ships from trading between any one port and another belonging to or under the influence of France. The second, issued in November, declared all the ports of France, of her colonies, her allies, and of all countries where the British flag was excluded, to be in a state of blockade, and all trade in the produce of such countries to be lawful prize.

The subsequent moves in this game of tit-for-tat are too many and complicated to be recorded here. Some of its effects were grievously to injure British trade, to drive the new-born foreign commerce of America practically off the seas, to

bring about war between England and America, and to sow in that country the seeds of a dislike of England which has endured ever since. The party of Reform opposed the Orders as being needlessly injurious to neutral powers and ruinous to English commerce ; and in Liverpool they were joined in their opposition by many belonging to the other side. They petitioned Parliament against the Orders, and employed Brougham to argue their case and call witnesses in its support, before both Houses, but the Ministry would not yield. The Orders were finally repealed in 1812, too late to prevent the outbreak of war with America.

As one of the principal merchants in the American trade, William Rathbone took a leading part in the agitation. Unlike many of his party and unlike Brougham, who took the line of depreciating America, he appears to have clearly foreseen her coming greatness, and to have felt strongly the importance of maintaining friendly relations with her, on the ground both of commercial interest and of natural affinities. He gave evidence in the House of Lords, and one of his friends was told by Lord Grenville afterwards that his clear and reasoned testimony produced so great an impression that, while it was being given, "a pin might have been heard drop."

This visit to London was his last public

service. He had never been a strong man, and had led a life of almost unremitting toil. The strain had been the greater because, with him, the difficult public questions of his day stirred anxieties and penetrated depths of feeling which, in most men, are only reached by their personal concerns. His strenuous, eager spirit had "o'er informed its tenement of clay," and when, in 1808, he fell a prey to an unnamed, agonising, internal disease, the doctors declared his constitution to be utterly worn out. For months his sufferings were terrible, but his spirit remained unsubdued. Within a few days of the end,—after some suitable remarks upon the emptiness of the things of this world,—he said with energy, "But I love the world, and should have wished to stay longer in it." He spoke of his approaching death as a "serious matter, but nothing dismal," and of his coffin as "only a packing-case." He died on the 11th of February 1809, in the fifty-second year of his age, exhorting his sons, almost with his last breath, to take warning by his example, and to pay more heed than he had done to the inexorable laws of Nature.

It is impossible to read through the papers upon which the foregoing short sketch of this William Rathbone is based, without being struck by the contrast between the smallness of his achievement and the great impression which his

character and abilities seem to have made upon those who knew him. Thus the son and biographer of Roscoe writes of his father's friend:

> The character of Mr. Rathbone was of the highest cast; and it was ever the subject of deep regret with those who knew and appreciated him, that a genius, which might have shone with the brightest lustre in the most extended sphere, was restricted to comparative obscurity. The talents for public life manifested by him on various occasions, when he came forward in support of liberal principles, were of the first order. A friend to peace, to toleration, and to improvement, had he been placed in a situation where scope could have been given to his lofty and benevolent views, his name must have been for ever associated with his country's happiness and honour; but confined to the narrow limits of a private station, a man framed of the clay from which in former days heroes and martyrs were moulded, expended the strength which might have ruled the nation, in contests, the recollection of which has already passed away. (*Life of Roscoe.*)

These are high words, and it must be admitted that they were written by one under the bias not only of personal friendship, but of fellow-membership of a group of men, whose consciousness of being a small and unpopular minority made them the more loyal to each other. But several other contemporary records strike much the same note. Mr. Thomas Creevey, though a Liverpool man, was certainly no mere provincial, and little given

to enthusiasm. Yet speaking in Liverpool eight years after William Rathbone's death, he was moved to refer to his former fellow-citizen as "that good and great and enlightened character, so honoured, so revered, so loved, so lamented."

William Rathbone's widow, Hannah Mary Rathbone, as she was, after the "plain style" of her sect, usually called, survived her husband for thirty years. Greenbank was left to her for her lifetime, and in obedience to her husband's dying wish that she should "have her outward habitation to her mind," she rebuilt the greater part of the house. The architect designed it in the style sometimes contumeliously called "Strawberry Hill Gothic." Before the building was finished she was overcome with remorse at having been guilty of the grievous inconsistency of spending money, even inadvertently, upon unnecessary ornament. Not long after the marriage of her eldest son, she insisted on giving up the house to him, and retiring to a little house called Woodcroft Cottage, which she built for herself near by. Her personality became familiar to many as an exquisite specimen of eighteenth-century Quaker womanhood. She was adored in turn by her father, husband, sons and grandsons, and many of their friends, young and old, joined in the cult. A lively description of her, and of Greenbank during her reign, couched in a style of whimsically affectionate eulogy, occurs

Green Bank.

in the Autobiography of H. F. Chorley.[1] I give an extract :

Hannah Mary Rathbone was a noble and fascinating woman. . . . In 1819, when I stayed at Green Bank, she was in the last ripeness of her maturity, looking older than her years, but as beautiful as any picture which can be offered by freshest youth. . . . Her profuse white hair, which had been white from an early age, was cut straight like a man's, to lie simply on her forehead. Above this was her spotless cap of white net, rescued from meagreness by a quilled border and a sort of scarf of the same material round it—a head-dress as picturesque, without being queer, as if its wearer had studied for years how to arrange it. Her gown was always a dark silk, with a quantity of delicate muslin to swathe the throat, and a shawl which covered the stoop of her short figure—the shawl never gay, though mostly rich. But the face was simply one of the most beautiful faces (without regularity) that I have ever seen ; beautiful in spite of its being slightly underhung : the eyes were so deep, brilliant, and tender ; the tint was so fresh, the expression was so noble and so affectionate ; and the voice matched the face—so low it was, so kind, so cordial, and, as I fancied, so irresistibly intimate, which means appreciating. . . .

She had been throughout her life the admired friend and counsellor of many distinguished men, all belonging

[1] Henry Fothergill Chorley (1808-1872), the well-known critic, and the friend of Mendelssohn, Dickens, Lady Blessington, and, in fact, nearly every one worth knowing in the artistic and social world of early Victorian London. Chorley, in his youth, was for some years in a Liverpool office, and, then and afterwards, paid many visits to Greenbank. He left his Memoirs for posthumous publication.

to the liberal school of ideas and philosophies, which were wakened, especially in the world of Dissenters, by the first French Revolution. . . .

Since that time I have been in many luxurious houses; but anything like the delicious and elegant comfort of Green Bank during her reign I have never known—plenty without coarseness; exquisiteness without that super-delicacy which oppresses by its extravagance.[1] It was a house to which the sick went to be nursed, and the benevolent to have their plans carried out. It was anything but a hide-bound or Puritanical house; for the library was copious, and novels and poems were read aloud in the parlours, and such men as William Roscoe, Robert Owen, Sylvester of Derby, Combe of Edinburgh, came and went. There was a capital garden; there was a double verandah—and if I live to see all the glories of sun, moon, and seven stars, I shall never see that verandah equalled; and there was a pianoforte — not like my mother's pianoforte at Green End (which Dickens must have known, else he could never have described Miss Tox's instrument, with the wreath of sweet peas round its maker's name, in *Dombey*)—kept under lock and key. There were water and a boat; but more, there was a touch of the true fire from Heaven in the owner of all these delights, which spoke to me in a way hardly to be described, never to be forgotten. . . .

How that great, and good, and gentle woman ruled her family—having been left a widow at middle age—how toned them to a standard such as few even try to

[1] Early impressions are strong, and the visit described was Chorley's first visit to a well-to-do home. His parents, though of a good Lancashire family, were in very straitened circumstances.

reach, many, very many, living know as well as I. Few have influenced so many by their affections, by their reason, by their understanding, so honourably as that retiring, delicate woman; and it is a pleasure (not without tears in it) to me to think that when we are all no more, some one, untouched by family partiality or tradition, shall say this much by way of laying a leaf on a modest, but a very holy, grave.

William Rathbone's eldest son and successor was just of age when his father died, and his brother Richard was a year younger. He was hardly, perhaps, his father's equal in intellectual power nor in native eloquence; but he had high courage and an ardent, generous nature. His temper was quick, and when roused by anything he considered wrong or unjust, his judgments were apt to be severe and his speech caustic. He suffered all his earlier life from dyspepsia, which caused at times great depression, and made the starting of every activity or change in its direction a painful effort. But he had high principles and strong will enough to overcome these obstacles to energy, and he led a life nearly as full and much more extended than his father's. His lot, too, fell in happier times, and he was able to see more fruit of his labours.

In 1812 he married Elizabeth Greg, daughter of Samuel Greg of Quarry Bank, near Manchester. She was the eldest of twelve children, of whom only two died under seventy. They were all

brought up in a liberal atmosphere, and encouraged to take an active interest and, as far as circumstances permitted, an active part in public work of some kind—political, educational, or philanthropic. The eldest daughter was mentally and physically one of the strongest of them all. She had great insight into character, and a cool, clear judgment, upon which her husband, and later on her sons and daughters, placed an almost unbounded and implicit reliance. Her husband consulted her upon all his work; and in the educational questions which formed no inconsiderable part of it, it was usually she who initiated and suggested, though the custom of the day prevented her from coming forward openly. Between her and her eldest son, William, the subject of this Memoir, there was a very strong resemblance—physical, mental, and moral. Both had an abounding, exuberant, extraordinarily tenacious vitality. The bent of both minds was intensely practical, amounting almost to the genius of common sense. In both, at least in their old age, conscience and will seemed almost to have grown into one; so that what they felt to be right, that they instinctively wished, and desired, and strove at once to do. But to enlarge upon this resemblance would be to anticipate the later portions of this Memoir.

As the Gregs were Unitarians, William Rath-

WILLIAM RATHBONE (1787–1868).
Father of the subject of this Memoir.

William Rathbone.

bone had, according to the discipline of the Society of Friends, incurred the penalty of expulsion by marrying out of the body. He was, however, readmitted—it is said, upon his giving an assurance that, though he could not out of courtesy to his wife say he repented having married her, he would not do it again. Some years later he and his family finally severed their connection with the Society, and joined a congregation of Unitarians.

At the time of his marriage William Rathbone was already deeply immersed in local politics, helping to organise the various petitions, and addressing the meetings, in favour of Reform, which were held in Liverpool during the period between the end of the war and the final passing of the Reform Act. That period was one of poverty and suffering and consequent discontent, attributed by the Government entirely to the "political agitators" who were working for Reform. Strong measures were taken to suppress the evil. The Habeas Corpus Act was suspended and the right of public meeting taken away. Lists of "suspected persons" — in other words, of members of the Reform party—all over the country were prepared, and their movements spied upon. William Rathbone's name was seen by a Conservative friend of the family in one of these lists, prepared for the eye of Lord Castlereagh, with the entry against it, "dangerous, but has done nothing as yet."

In 1820, at a town's meeting held to condole with His Majesty for the death of his father, George III., an incident happened which, though insignificant enough, established for William Rathbone, then about thirty years old, a reputation for moral courage which even his opponents never afterwards found reason to question. A Quaker, who in accordance with the rules of his Society kept his hat on when the rest of the audience uncovered, had it rudely knocked off his head. A Mr. Adam Lodge applauded the insult, exclaiming loudly: "If people will not conform to the decorums of society, they ought to keep out of that society." William Rathbone immediately came forward on the platform and, putting his own hat on, said that it would indeed be hard if the members of a Society who owed so much to the late king for the removal of their disabilities during his reign, were to be debarred from honouring his memory, unless they consented to violate their consciences. This act took the fancy of the meeting, feeling turned in favour of the Quaker, and when Mr. Lodge's name was proposed, as had been pre-arranged, to join the Mayor in presenting the address, the meeting rejected it and another name was put forward.

At about this time corruption at parliamentary and municipal elections reached its climax. In this respect the freemen voters of Liverpool

attained such an evil pre-eminence as almost to justify Lord Brougham's description of the city as "the greatest of the rotten boroughs." Being a wealthy community and one where party feeling ran high, candidates and their friends were able and willing to pay for votes on a scale unknown in humbler constituencies, and the market price rose steadily from the reasonable, well-established fee of five shillings—the supposed equivalent of the day's work lost in going to the poll—to the average reached in the Ewart and Denison election in 1830, of £40 a vote. This election, in which the candidates were both highly respected men, whose after careers in the House of Commons were conspicuously useful and honourable, cost over £80,000. Out of 4400 freemen a bare thousand remained unbribed. The high-water mark of corruption in municipal politics had been reached three years before, when two candidates for the office of Mayor, Mr. Robinson and Mr. Porter, spent £10,000 apiece, the only question between them being which should be Mayor first.

At the parliamentary contest of 1816, when the Reformers ran Leyland, a local banker, against Canning, William Rathbone had been treasurer of the election fund; and although he had used no bribes himself, he had had an insight into all that went on. The effect of the experience was to breed in him a deep-laid disgust and hatred of

corruption, and a conviction, which time only strengthened, that in Liverpool the first step towards uprooting the evil was to disfranchise the freemen.

The scandal raised by the Ewart and Denison election raised his hopes and those of his friends that something might be done. Ewart was unseated on petition in March 1831, and a month later the Reform Ministry was beaten in the House of Commons on a resolution moved by General Gascoigne, who for thirty-five years had been one of the members for Liverpool. In the succeeding election Ewart, Denison, and Gascoigne were again the candidates. By an Act passed three years before, any parliamentary candidate might in writing "demand the booths"; that is, require the erection of a compartment or polling station for every six hundred voters. The effect of this, if carried out, was greatly to shorten the duration of the election, and thus to limit the opportunities for corruption and drunkenness. But the Act had remained a dead letter; for no candidate had, so far, ventured to incur the displeasure of the corrupt portion of his constituency by putting it into force. William Rathbone made an effort to persuade the three candidates to unite in demanding the booths; but they all refused. He then announced that, rather than risk a repetition of the orgies of the previous election, he would get himself nominated as a candidate and enforce the Act himself. Strong

pressure was put upon him by his own party to desist. He was assured that he could not have chosen a more inopportune moment to anger the freemen; that he was giving the seat away to General Gascoigne, whose motion had carried the defeat of the Reform Bill; that he would be stoned, and every window in his house broken. He persisted; and the result more than justified him. The zeal in the country for Reform was so great that it infected even the freemen. Ewart and Denison headed the poll, while Gascoigne, who had stood by the freemen through thick and thin, was mobbed and execrated, and received only 450 votes. The erection of the booths, by limiting the duration of the poll to two days, was thought to have destroyed the only possible chance that remained to him of regaining by bribery his lost popularity. William Rathbone was received with enthusiasm, and escorted to his house in Abercromby Square by the cheers of the very mob, with whose vengeance for his interference with their usual carnival he had been threatened.

His favour with the freemen was not of long duration. The following year, another bye-election with bribery having taken place in the meantime, he and his friends prepared a Petition to Parliament, praying for inquiry into the alleged abuses in elections for many years, and for redress by the disfranchisement of the freemen. The Petition

was referred to a Committee of the House of Commons, chosen by ballot. The case for the petitioners was conducted by Sergeant Merryweather and Mr. Edward Rushton, and lasted from March until July 1833. They proved extensive and flagrant corruption and bribery for many years, and also that in two cases offices in the Customs were sold, and the money appropriated to the expenses of General Gascoigne's election.[1] The following year a Bill of Disfranchisement was introduced into the House of Commons, and passed through all its stages there in the teeth of the fiercest opposition, which was renewed with such success in the Lords that it never became law. In the cause of municipal reform, the friends of purity were more successful. After a long inquiry and a tremendous struggle, the Municipal Corporation Reform Bill was passed in 1835.[2]

[1] The evidence before this Commission affords some picturesque if unsavoury reading. One incident illustrates the reluctance with which some of the poorest voters yielded to irresistible temptation.

A canvasser for Mr. Denison, one John Atkinson, deposed that he had, with great difficulty, and relying upon the entreaties of the man's wife, persuaded a poor voter to take £50 for his vote. The man held out a long time, but at last caught up his coat and, putting it on, told Atkinson he would go with him. When they got to the polling station the man asked, "In whose interest am I here?" and on being told Mr. Denison's, voted accordingly. Mr. Denison, who was standing by, blandly expressed a desire to shake hands with his supporter, who roughly replied, "No sir, I have given you my vote, but I will not give you my hand."

What the future Speaker said and felt is not recorded.

[2] The later moves in this struggle for electoral purity in Liverpool are described at pp. 141-145.

During the three years occupied by this agitation, William Rathbone, and the friend most intimately associated with him in the matter, Mr. R. E. Harvey, were obliged to pass a large part of each session in London, and to devote a considerable portion of their own fortunes to the expenses of the struggle. The sacrifice, to him at least, was a very real one, for he detested from the bottom of his heart the turmoil of political negotiations in which he found himself in London, and he could ill spare the time from his business. In Liverpool their efforts made them, for the moment, very unpopular. They were accused of blackening the character of their native city —although, after the notorious scandal of the Ewart-Denison election, that was perhaps scarcely possible. On one occasion, on his return from London, William Rathbone was openly hissed on 'Change. In 1835, when Municipal Reform was an accomplished fact, there was a revulsion of feeling, and he and Mr. Harvey were presented by their fellow-citizens with services of plate in commemoration of their labours. At the November election the Liberals were returned to power with the unprecedented majority of fifty-nine seats out of sixty-four, and very unwisely, against the advice of many of their best friends, they chose all the sixteen aldermen out of their own party—a precedent which the Tories assiduously followed

when they regained their usual predominance. William Rathbone, who was one of the new councillors, was offered the Mayoralty. He declined it at the time; but two years later, in 1837, he accepted the office of Mayor, and in that capacity laid the foundation stone of St. George's Hall, and did the honours of Liverpool to Marshal Soult.

It was not long before he and his party again came into sharp conflict with the opinion of the majority. The Corporation owned two elementary schools, supported out of the rates and maintained "on the principles of the Church of England." This arrangement had always seemed to the Reformers unjust to all dissenting sects, but more especially to the Roman Catholics, who formed the majority of that poorest section of the community, for whose benefit these schools were especially intended. As soon as the Whigs found themselves in a majority a committee was appointed, of which William Rathbone, who in this matter had an unseen but able colleague in his wife, was one of the most active members. After much consideration it was decided to introduce what was known as the Irish National system. The children all received secular instruction together, and then Protestants and Catholics were congregated into separate rooms, where the Protestants received religious instruction from Mr. Aspinall, the incumbent of one of the Corporation churches, and

the Catholics from a priest of their own denomination.

This arrangement was then considered quite satisfactory by the Catholics, and at first it seemed likely to satisfy the Church party also. But a section of the Low Church clergy, headed by the Rev. Hugh M'Neil, at once saw their opportunity for at the same time dealing a blow at the Catholics and undermining the Liberal majority in the Council. From the pulpit and the platform, and through the medium of the press, they began a campaign against the Corporation schools which lasted for four years. To strengthen their case they employed such flagrant and deliberate misrepresentation as it would be hard to parallel, even in the annals of religious controversy. The Bible, they shouted, had been banished from the schools. They knew perfectly well that it was being taught there daily, by a clergyman of their own Church, more systematically and intelligently than ever before. But the appeal to religious intolerance is never made in Liverpool without a response. The electors would probably in any case have gone back sooner or later to their old allegiance; but the cry of "No Popery" hastened and stimulated the reaction.

The municipal elections for the next three years were fought mainly on this issue, and a Bible, suspended to a pole, was carried at the

head of the Tory processions. The Whigs steadily lost ground, until, in 1841, the *coup de grâce* came in the return of thirteen Tory candidates out of sixteen. William Rathbone, who had sat for Pitt Street Ward, was one of the dispossessed Whigs. He soon returned to the Council as member for Vauxhall Ward, but in 1850 was again thrown out—this time on the question of the town's water supply. He had been chairman of the committee that carried the Rivington Pike scheme, which was denounced by a large party outside the Council as unnecessarily extensive and extravagant. The need in later years for the supplementary supply from Vyrnwy proves that, if anything, the Rivington scheme had been hardly extensive enough.

After the defeat of the Whigs on the educational question, William Rathbone and his wife turned their attention to the Hibernian Schools and succeeded in making them, for their day, model elementary schools. The religious instruction was managed upon the Irish system, and Catholic and Protestant children sat harmoniously side by side. The schools became noted for the number and excellence of the teachers whom they trained.

In 1870, when Mr. Forster's Education Act was under discussion, Mrs. Rathbone, then in her eighty-first year, sent her son William, who was

in Parliament, a string of memoranda, based upon her experience as a school-manager, dealing with the practical working of various clauses of the Bill. These he showed to Mr. Forster, who afterwards assured him that he had found them the most useful hints of their kind that he had received during the passage of the Bill.

William Rathbone long outlived the unpopularity brought on him in early manhood by his advocacy of measures distasteful to the majority, or by his caustic tongue. His fellow-citizens, with the generosity which Liverpool has always shown to those who have, in the main, served her well, forgot what was repugnant to them in his political or theological views, and remembered only his long and disinterested labours, his zeal in every cause of social and civic improvement, and his benevolence to the poor. His influence in the town grew steadily. His portrait, which at the time of his greatest unpopularity had been rejected by the Town Council, when offered by some of his friends, was unearthed from the obscurity of the Mechanics Institute and hung in the Council Chamber. After his death, a statue of him, an admirable likeness, was erected by public subscription in Sefton Park. His own character during these later years had ripened and mellowed. He had an old-world, elaborate courtesy of manner, which, combined with a certain antique distinction

of dress, gave him an air of belonging to a generation at least one before his own. A sarcastic turn of speech made him, especially to young people, a rather formidable old gentleman. But he could be a genial and charming host, and he and his wife had always made of their home a kind of general rendezvous for all visitors to Liverpool who had some especial opinion to propagate, or some philanthropic scheme to advance. If the visitor happened to be obscure, or in bad health, or regarded with suspicion by the rest of the world as a heretic or a faddist, his welcome was all the more sure.

Audubon, the American naturalist; Robert Owen, the socialistic founder of New Lanark and New Harmony; Blanco White, the former Spanish priest, and author of the once-famous *Doblado's Letters*; Dorothea Dix, who reformed the lunatic asylums of the United States and of several parts of Europe; Lady Byron; and Father Mathew, the temperance reformer,—were some of these casual visitors who afterwards became lifelong friends.

At the beginning of 1868 William Rathbone's health began seriously to fail. He was told by the doctors that an operation, if successful, might give him several years of comfort and intercourse with his friends, and that without it his life would have to be that of an invalid; but that it was not unlikely that the issue would be fatal. He did

not hesitate to make his choice. He "had no wish to live to be a burden upon others, and would take the full responsibility of the operation." He set all his affairs, down to the minutest detail, in order, but he refused to express to his sons any wishes regarding the continuance of his work or of his subscriptions. While in the world he had done what he thought right; when he was gone, the responsibility of his property became theirs, and he would not fetter their freedom. He died a few days after the operation, on February 1, 1868, in the eighty-first year of his age. His wife survived him for fifteen years.

The foregoing sketch of William Rathbone's predecessors in Liverpool has extended itself beyond the limit originally intended for it. In thinking over the past, it was impossible not to feel to how unusual an extent the life and character which are the principal subject of this Memoir, were the outcome and the natural continuation of the lives that had gone before. But for the incidents of birth and death, they might seem—at least on a cursory view which ignored the real differences of individuality and power—to be but a single life extended over three generations. It seemed therefore impossible to deal adequately with the one, without giving some account of the others. Perhaps, too, there is some interest, at least for the limited circle for whom this book is

intended, in tracing in the lives of a series of individuals, none of them with any pretensions to celebrity, but all, within the limits of their own town, essentially public men, the gradual shifting of activities, corresponding with the shifting of the real centre of national interest, from civil and religious liberty in the eighteenth century, to political reform in the first half of the nineteenth, and again to social reform during the last fifty years.

Lastly, it must be said, that if any reader find the few foregoing pages wearisomely eulogistic, it should be remembered that in writing of lives beyond the reach of living memories, one has to use materials, written or traditionary, as one finds them, and when these relate to persons not famous enough to have enemies, they are apt to reveal an observance even too scrupulous to be quite satisfactory to the would-be picturesque biographer, of the rule "*De mortuis, nil nisi bonum.*" At least nothing of a eulogistic nature has been used that appeared merely conventional, or that had not a solid backing of fact.

CHAPTER II

EARLY YEARS—1819 TO 1842

WILLIAM RATHBONE, the sixth bearer of that name, was born on the 11th of February 1819: exactly ten years after the death of the grandfather whose character and temperament he seems in several points to have inherited. In some Reminiscences set down in his old age for the amusement of his family, he wrote:[1] "I was born at Cornhill, a piece of land between the Salthouse Dock and the river, now the site of the Albert Dock Warehouses. There my grandfather and father in turn had possessed a large warehouse, an office, and their dwelling-place,—using Greenbank as a country resort in summer. We soon afterwards removed from Cornhill to a house in Hope Street, facing Falkner Street; and in 1825 we moved again to a house at the south-west corner

[1] In the quotations given from these Reminiscences, names and dates have occasionally been corrected or supplied, and such insignificant verbal alterations made as were necessary to connect together just those sentences or fragments of sentences which it was desired to extract.

of Abercromby Square, which was built for my father's occupation. While we lived in Hope Street the celebrated Burke and Hare murders took place, and as some bodies intended for dissection were found on the premises of a joiner three or four doors from our house, we children imagined that the cemetery at the top of Duke Street, then a deserted stone quarry, had been the resort of Burke and Hare in Liverpool, and used to put our hands before our faces when out at dusk, to avoid the fatal pitch plaster with which they suffocated their victims."

It is difficult for the inhabitants of the Liverpool of to-day to realise what a small place comparatively was the Liverpool of eighty years ago. It was the custom then for prosperous men of business to live, as William Rathbone's father and grandfather did, opposite to or above their own offices and warehouses, and on fine evenings they took the air sitting by the dock side, while their children played at a safe distance from the deep water. St. Anne's Street was then the fashionable abode of the great West Indian merchants of the day, while Rodney Street was the new quarter to which some of them, including Mr. Gladstone's father, had migrated. Hope Street and Abercromby Square, mentioned in the above passage, now seem almost in the centre of the town, but they were then on its very border, and all beyond were fields and lanes. One of

William Rathbone's earliest recollections was of flushing a snipe while gathering water-cresses in a brook running where Falkner Street (then Crab-tree Lane) now stands.

At the age of four, he was sent to a day-school in Seel Street, having been detected in inciting his elder sister to rebellion against their governess.

A letter from his grandmother, Mrs. Samuel Greg, gives a lively but unflattering picture of him at this age :

My dear Friend—I thought the hour spent at lessons morning and afternoon (and less sitting still this hot weather is not desirable) might be well spent in writing a letter, and told Willy one morning if he would tell me what to say, I would write it quite fair, and then he could copy my writing. This he quite disdained, and said, as he does of everything, "that he can do all that very well, and never needs a copy at home," so I merely ruled lines and provided him with pen and ink, and what is written on the other side, with inquiries about spelling, and thinking what to say, which I did not help him to, just filled up the hour. He told me he had made only one mistake, and had scratched this out; and by showing him there was one in *every line*, I have endeavoured to make it a lesson of humility; and think if he sometimes had it pointed out to him, his boasting so much might be corrected quietly, as it involves, besides pride, a carelessness about *truth*, which certainly at his age no time should be lost in rectifying; and he is so sensible, that reasoning with him always seems to impress him for the time. He has been more cheerful since he came here

than I ever saw him, and even the expression of his countenance is improving, and I hope may recover in time the unequalled beauty he had at two years old, before discontent, and the exercise of power, which always brings discontent, clouded its open cheerfulness. Indeed he has been so happy here on the whole—the harvest, and various works going on have furnished him with such a succession of amusements—that I wish he could have remained longer, so as to recover some *habit* of cheerfulness, and to lose that of listlessness; for it has only been when (as appeared to me) the fermety—and another time a fresh egg Mrs. H. at the Farm gave him, and he had it dressed for his lunch—made him uneasy, that he has said, "I *must* go home on Monday," or, "I expect to go home on Tuesday, as Miss Tomlinson will expect me." These, however, have been momentary thoughts, and we have had nothing to call a cloud, or a cry. . . .

You will be amused by the attempts to spell *fermety*, which I do not know that I spell right myself. I think I mentioned before that I had found it advisable to give up the plan of Debtor and Creditor account of time and work. "How long does it want now?" "Oh, I am sure it is more than a minute," etc., took up the attention, and was very unfavourable to the deference and respect to teachers, etc., that Willy most wants. I am well persuaded that the degree of *restraint* established here, and *decorum* expected, has made him relish his pleasures much more, and be tenfold happier than when uncontrolled—and also more affectionate and feeling to others.

Apparently the discipline of home and a day-school was found insufficient to wean this youth

from "the exercise of power" and its evil results, for when just six, he was sent to a small boarding-school at Gateacre. This is only four miles from Liverpool, and he was fetched home for his Saturdays and Sundays. Three years later, his parents heard of a school at Cheam, conducted on the new Pestalozzian system, in which they were greatly interested. It was kept by a clergyman, the Rev. William Brown, on strictly orthodox Church lines. William arrived there in a broad-brimmed Quaker hat intended to shade his eyes. This at first caused much amusement, and earned him the name of the little Quaker. It did not, however, trouble him much or long, for he was an active boy, fond of mischief, and got on well with his school-fellows. Mr. Brown's letters show that he was interested in his new pupil, and delighted with that pupil's parents, whose vivid interest in educational methods contrasted with the usual dead level of parental apathy. A year later, William was moved nearer home, to a school of about a hundred boys, kept by Mr. Voelker at St. Domingo House, Everton. His brother Samuel, younger by three years, was sent with him, to begin that close companionship in work and interests which lasted for the rest of their lives. There he spent the remainder of his school-days, from 1830 to 1835. His recollection of them and of his master may be told in his own words :

Mr. Voelker was a German and an enthusiast. He was supposed to have been a member of the Tugendbund, the league formed to exact from the King of Prussia a fulfilment of his promise of freedom, and he had had to fly from Germany when despotism was re-established in Prussia, after the close of the Napoleonic wars. He had a very high tone of character: generous, courageous, enthusiastic, with almost a woman's unselfishness and refinement, and his moral influence over the boys did much to make them the useful men they were in after life. The school was a very good one in leading boys to think, in giving them a liking for reading, and in teaching them mathematics and modern languages; but it did not turn out classical scholars, and fitted people more for practical thought and action than for the learned professions. Many of the boys were afterwards successful as merchants, manufacturers, and politicians. Among the more intimate friends I made there were Thomas Ashton, James Stansfeld, James Worthington, and J. Birley. The last two were afterwards partners; Stansfeld I knew well in the House of Commons; and Thomas Ashton was one of the most intimate and best friends a man ever had. I had a very pleasant time at school, never doing anything seriously wrong, but getting into plenty of active mischief, and possessing a very comfortable sort of conscience, on which—so long as I was never guilty of untruth or anything foul or mean—other sins of omission and commission sat very lightly. During my last six months I was left the head boy. I am afraid that I had been rather prominent in insubordination against any master I thought incompetent or unjust; and at the end of the previous term, one of the masters whom I liked came to me and said that Mr. Voelker was rather

troubled at the idea of such a rebel as I was being left the head of the school. The school was absolutely free from serious faults, but they had got into the way of innumerable small punishments for small offences, such as "breaking bounds," or a "pillow fight" between two boys, or much of active boyishness that Mr. Voelker would have been only too glad if his masters would have avoided taking so much trouble to find out. I pointed out this to my friend, and said it was difficult to expect authority to be respected which was so minute and trivial in its dealings; that if they would give up all these minor tasks which encroached upon our play hours, I thought I might engage that they would have infinitely less trouble with us. They took us at our word, and certainly there were never a better set of boys than during those few months. But it was awfully dull, and the boys found it so; and after I and a few more of the old set left, leaving three or four great hulking, idle fellows, without principle or refinement, some drinking and other evil got into the school, and so disgusted Mr. Voelker that he closed it and went back to Switzerland. I left school a fair French and German scholar, a very poor classical one, with a decided desire for knowledge, a good deal of miscellaneous information and general observation, but a careless worker, with a very bad hand-writing.

The boy then became junior apprentice in the small office of Messrs. Nicol, Duckworth, and Co., merchants in the Bombay and Mediterranean trade, where he remained for three years.

There I did nothing but copy letters and accounts, run errands, mend the fires, and take weights on the

dock quays and in warehouses. . . . This period of my apprenticeship was one of the least happy periods of my life. Sam was still at school, and I had no young friends in Liverpool. My two companions in the office were very good-natured but uncultivated and rather coarse Scotchmen, with whom I never became intimate. Though I picked up a good deal of business information and knowledge of how work was done, I had nothing in business really to occupy my thoughts and interests, and I became rather morbid and sentimental. I was conscious of having wasted a good deal of time at school, and I thought I had missed the chance of making a life worth living. Fortunately, a young lady, daughter of Dr. Tuckerman of Boston, much older than myself, and a great friend of my eldest sister, made more than one long stay with us. She was highly cultivated, very fond of German poetry, and I admired her genius[1] and intelligence greatly. She was herself rather morbid, but had the sense to know that it was a mistake, and to convince me that it was mere childishness regarding the past, as I was still a boy and had my life before me in which to amend. My elder sisters, too, did all that they could, both for Sam and myself, being always ready to put aside their own pursuits, to sympathise with us, and to try to lead us to worthy interests and steady work.

During these three years in fact, from the sixteenth to the nineteenth of his life, William Rathbone was making the rough passage from boyhood to manhood, and the "very comfortable sort of conscience" of his school-days was quickening into the

[1] William Rathbone frequently used this word in its old-fashioned sense, as roughly equivalent to "individuality"—"mental characteristics."

sensitiveness and activity which it never again lost. He must have had from the first a stiff moral backbone, and a clear notion of what the possibilities of life were for him. When he first came into Nicol and Duckworth's office he found that owing to the amount of time and money his father gave to public work, an erroneous impression prevailed that he was a very rich man, and that his eldest son was destined for political life rather than for a serious business career. Many boys of sixteen would have slidden more or less consciously into the same belief, but he set himself deliberately to overthrow it by a scrupulously exact and punctual performance of his very dull duties. He used to say that much of what he did during those years seemed to him utterly useless at the time, but that afterwards he found the advantage of it in several ways, and especially in enabling him to judge how every one in his office, from highest to lowest, was doing his work.

As illustrating the change produced in the conditions of commerce by the introduction of steam-ships, he described how he had once during his apprenticeship posted thirty letters on thirty consecutive days in the letter-box of a single ship which was waiting to sail for Bombay, but was detained day after day for a month by contrary winds. When at last the wind changed, the Mersey presented a beautiful sight. It was so crowded

with white-sailed ships, all tacking outwards, that it looked as though you could have crossed it by stepping from deck to deck.

Some years earlier than this, but still, he believed, in his own lifetime, the firms of Cropper, Benson, and Co., and Rathbone Brothers and Co., which were closely connected, joined in chartering a Liverpool pilot-boat to take out to their correspondents in New York the news of a bad harvest and the approaching opening of the ports to the importation of wheat. She was towed out to sea by the one little Mersey steam ferry-boat, not larger than many a modern steam-launch, while one of the strong, persistent winds from the west was blowing. When the pilot-boat arrived back in the Mersey, she found the westerly winds still prevailing, and all the vessels still in the river that she had left there.

Nicol and Duckworth's largest ship was the *Eucles*, an East Indian of 250 tons. This took more than a fortnight to discharge, and the captain was considered very well paid at £10 a month. Freight from the East Indies was then £4 or £5 a ton. At that time the record passage had been made to New York by the *Independence*, of the old line of New York packets, in fourteen days. She was a ship of 300 tons. When a New York firm started the Dramatic Line in opposition, with ships of 600 and 700 tons, everybody anticipated that they

would fail, as they were thought too large to be run at a profit.

The dulness of William Rathbone's life during these years may have indirectly done him some service by leaving his mind the more open to an influence which had already been brought to bear on it, and which was destined to be probably the deepest and most permanent that his spiritual life ever knew. Since their final severance from the Society of Friends, the Rathbones had attended the Unitarian Chapel in Renshaw Street. It was a plain, unpretentious building, with a flat roof and commodious galleries, of the type then usual for Nonconformist chapels. In 1831, the Rev. John Hamilton Thom was appointed to the ministry there—a ministry which was to last, with one break of three years, till the close of 1866. At its beginning, Mr. Thom was only twenty-three years old, and the congregation he had to face numbered among its members men and women who were in their several ways leaders in the political, civic, and literary life of the town. Their own earnestness of conviction and of life made them perhaps the better able to appreciate unusual power in others, and Mr. Thom's influence among them soon became unique and profound. His following was never a very large one, for although he had some of the best qualities of an orator, his sermons made too great a demand upon

the attention and spiritual thoughtfulness of his hearers to suit the mass of churchgoers. The qualification necessary for understanding and responding to them was not indeed culture nor cleverness, for they scarcely ever contained learned allusions, and rarely, if ever, entered the sphere of metaphysical or theological speculation. A stranger reading them would have to infer the section of the Christian Church to which the writer belonged—if he did discover it—rather from the absence of certain allusions and phrases than from any more positive evidence. When forced from outside to define his doctrinal position, he could do so in outlines that have nothing blurred or hazy about them, and, as his contributions to the "Liverpool Controversy"[1] show, he was, when thus roused, a powerful, an acute, and an unsparing controversialist. But doctrinal theology was not the special function of his preaching. In the words of his lifelong and intimate friend, Dr. James Martineau, "his function was to realise and interpret the relation and intercommunion between the human spirit and the Divine, and from his own inward experience bring it home to the conscious-

[1] In 1839, thirteen clergymen of the Church of England challenged the three Unitarian ministers in Liverpool—James Martineau, J. H. Thom, and Henry Giles—to a public discussion of the doctrinal questions at issue between Unitarians and Trinitarians. The result was a series of lectures delivered by each side on alternate dates. The whole series was reissued by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association in 1876.

ness of others."[1] But it would be a mistake to suppose from this description that the tenor of his preaching was merely contemplative and mystical —made up of holy musings and emotions. Most of it, on the contrary, is concerned with definite principles of character and conduct; but in the formulation of these he appeals not to utilitarian sanctions, but to those drawn from the depths of a profound and distinctively Christian religious experience. Perhaps it would be impossible to sum up the general scope of his sermons better than is done in the title which Mr. Thom himself gave to the two volumes published during his lifetime. They are an attempt to interpret, and to apply to the conditions of modern life, "the laws of life after the mind of Christ."[2]

Of his influence on his audience it is difficult to speak. To many of them he appears to have been what Channing had been to himself, "the opener of a new religious life, not as the founder of a school, but as the destroyer of all schools except the school of the spirit."[3]

In moments of intimate conversation, William Rathbone often tried to describe the impression which this preaching left upon his own mind. The point upon which he laid most stress was, perhaps,

[1] Memorial Preface to *A Spiritual Faith*, by J. H. Thom.

[2] *Laws of Life after the Mind of Christ.* Philip Green, Strand.

[3] Speech by J. H. Thom at the Channing Centenary Celebration in Liverpool, 1880.

the poignancy of its appeal to the individual conscience—an appeal which silenced all desire to question, to speculate, to note the application of the preacher's words to others. But perhaps it would be impossible to convey the gist of his description of what Mr. Thom's sermons actually did for their hearers, better than by quoting a passage from one of the sermons themselves, in which the preacher defines his own function. He has been denouncing the habit of facile discussion and criticism of sermons, and asks the question:

> Is a good sermon one that you are to judge, or one that judges you? What *is* a good sermon? Something that lays the law of God upon a man's conscience, that brings the Spirit of God into a man's soul, that makes a man start under the keen sense of unsuspected obligations, and feel to the quick that his very peace lies in toils that he shrinks from, and in efforts that he shuns as sacrifices. I do not know that a "good sermon" should "please" any one,—or that it should leave him in a condition to express an easy opinion about it,—but rather that it should give him an opinion of himself on which he would not desire to say anything, and introduce some thoughts and purposes into his heart, on which the deeper they went, the more would he be disposed to be silent just then.[1]

Preaching such as this, which quickens the buried seeds of life in a man's own soul, soon makes him independent even of itself. It was

[1] *A Minister of God*, p. 92.

seldom, William Rathbone said, that as a young man he was able to listen to the whole of a Sunday morning's discourse. By the time it was half over, his mind had travelled away on the track of the "thoughts and purposes" it had introduced, and was grappling with the "unsuspected obligations" which had been revealed.

As a rule, Mr. Thom dealt only with the springs and principles of conduct, and his preaching was, as one of his hearers has described it, "singularly free from any kind of personal or local allusion, from any element of consideration for the special circumstances of himself or others." But there were exceptions to this rule. One outgrowth of the work of the Unitarian body in Liverpool was initiated by him in a sermon, and for the remainder of his long life he devoted much thought to its development. This was the system of Domestic Missions, a ministry set apart for bringing religious teaching to the poor in their own homes. The idea had been brought to England by Dr. Joseph Tuckerman of Boston, who had visited Liverpool in 1833, and had then stayed with the Rathbones at Greenbank. It was two years later, on Christmas Day 1835, that Mr. Thom preached the sermon out of which the Liverpool Domestic Mission grew. Young William Rathbone, then just at the beginning of his apprenticeship, was present; and long afterwards,

when presiding at the Annual Meeting of the Mission, he alluded to the occasion on which the seed had been sown :

On Christmas Day, thirty-eight years ago, a sermon was preached in Renshaw Street Chapel, out of which this Mission arose ; and which left a more clear and permanent religious impression upon my mind than any sermon I have ever listened to. The preacher took for his text the question of John the Baptist : " Art thou He that should come ? " and Christ's answer, " The poor have the gospel preached to them." He called on us to consider what, on that crucial evidence, the Christianity of our age was worth, and told us that what we as Christians are is to be seen in what those who live by the people and wield the influences of society suffer the people to be. I was then just entering on the world's work, with all the hopes and aspirations of seventeen, and I felt so strongly the truth of the preacher's words that —had I not doubted my power of influencing others by speech—I believe I should have abandoned the desk for work in the streets and courts of our town. I remained in the work for which circumstances seemed to destine me, and am grateful for success beyond my deserts or most ambitious thoughts. But I feel now as I felt then, that had I possessed the necessary powers successfully to carry Christ's gospel of peace and hope and purity to the toiling and suffering, it would be a success far nobler, worthier, and more to be desired than any other whatever.

In 1838, Mr. Thom married Hannah Mary, the second daughter of Mr. William Rathbone,

senior, and was thus brought into still closer relation with his young brother-in-law.

At the close of his three years with Nicol, Duckworth, and Co., William Rathbone went for a short time into his father's office, where, owing to the illness or absence of some of the clerks, he had to attend to the work of two or three departments. In the autumn of 1839, he persuaded his father to allow him a year's leave of absence, and with his old school-fellow and most intimate friend, Thomas Ashton, went to study at the University of Heidelberg. After much consideration, they had fixed upon this University for the sake of working under two of the professors there —Schlosser,[1] then a historian of considerable celebrity, and Zacharia,[2] one of the principal authors, after Napoleon, of the Code Napoleon, and well known as a professor of Naturrecht, that is, the principles of Law and Jurisprudence; a study at that time very little pursued in England. From Oxford and Cambridge the two young men would have been shut out by the Tests, even if they could have spared the three or four years

[1] Christoph Friedrich Schlosser (1776-1861), Professor of History at Heidelberg. Principal works: *Geschichte des 18. Jahrh, Universalhistorische übersicht der Geschichte der Alten Welt, Weltgeschichte für das deutsche Volk*, etc. Biographies by Gervinus (1861) and Weber (1876).

[2] Karl Salomo Zachariä von Lingenthal (1769-1843), Professor of Law in Heidelberg, 1807; ennobled 1842. Principal works: *Handbuch des Französ: Zivilrechts; Vierzig Bücher vom Staat*, 7 vols., 1839.

over which every course of study there is spread. It may be doubted whether the majority of English undergraduates get more, or even as much, good from their three years' pleasant existence at college as these two managed to get out of a single session's hard study, followed by several months' travelling. Although William Rathbone had a strong love of reading, and a real faculty for the study of history and political science (a term apparently uninvented then), he was not by nature a scholar, nor even a student, for study's sake. Knowledge was always to him a means, and not an end. He studied the past, in the hope that it would help him to understand the present and foresee the future; and principles, in order that he might apply them to practice in his after life. Over the majority of young men who go straight from school to college, he had one great advantage—that he had a clearly defined notion, based in part on practical experience, of the field in which the knowledge acquired and powers developed at college would be employed. He expected to spend a great part of his life in doing the work of a merchant and shipowner, and he had had the three years of his apprenticeship to learn what kind of work that was. He intended that what remained should be given to public work, probably in or for his native town.

In the Reminiscences from which we have

already quoted, he describes his memories of this session at Heidelberg :

We worked very hard and steadily, getting up at six, or half-past six, in the morning, and going on till we went to bed at night, our exercise and relaxation being walking in and out of the town—nearly a mile from our lodgings—to our lectures and to our dinner at the Prinz Karl. There, as it was out of the travelling season, our dinner only cost us 1/2 a day, including, if we chose to drink it, a pint of very light wine. On Saturday we took a half-holiday and a walk, and had two or four of the students to smoke and drink tea with us. We never went to the "Kneips" with the students. It involved a great deal of beer drinking, with possibly an occasional duel, which, though not dangerous, left disfigurements honourable in Germany, but ridiculed in England. I look upon this year as one of the most progressive of my life, and a very happy one. I gained habits of steady work and study, which laid a foundation for reading afterwards, always with a view to the bearing of what I read on active life and politics. Though working so hard I never was in more perfect health than during that year. The knowledge, also, which I acquired of foreign politics has enabled me ever since to watch with great interest the development of Europe, and especially of Germany, from the state in which it was left by the Middle Ages.

In Germany in 1839-40 there was hardly an independent middle class, except in free towns like Hamburg, Frankfurt, Bremen, etc. Every career open to the students was controlled by the Government. Doctors, mayors, lawyers, schoolmasters, etc., were all appointed

by the Government, who watched vigilantly, and laid the "dead hand" on any symptoms of liberality in thought and character. Schlosser said to me one day, "If you listen to the talk of the students, you would suppose the country was on the verge of some great political revolution; but, like those who have gone before them, as soon as they approach the time when they have to leave the University, they will remember that every prospect in life depends on the favour of the Government, and all this wild talk at their Kneips and beer gardens will cease. The Government take no note of anything that the ordinary beer-drinking, vapouring, duelling German student says, but if they observe a determined hard worker, reserved and laborious, they take trouble to find out whether he holds liberal opinions, and if he does, he is a marked man, and will never get on, unless he can convince the Government that he has changed them."

The Grand Duke of Baden of that time was a very liberal man, and anxious that his people should be free; but, as Schlosser said, he was one of the very few Liberals in his dominions, and could not make them understand how to set about reform. "They could not make a gutter in Heidelberg without running to the capital to ask the Government to do it for them." Schlosser gave me a curious instance from his own experience, how things were managed in Germany so as to effectually repress liberal opinions and yet cause no scandal or outcry. The Berlin University was at that time not distinguished, and they were anxious to make it so; and Schlosser, then about the first historian in Europe, was privately informed that the Senate had determined to invite him to take the Chair of History, but he heard no more of it. What happened was this. The Prussian Minister was afraid of

Schlosser's well-known liberal opinions and freedom in expressing them. He made no open objection to the appointment, but he sent for each of the Senate or Governing Body, in turn, and after discussing the University affairs, said, "Is it true that you are thinking of asking Geheimer Hofrath Schlosser to take the Chair of History at Berlin? Do you think he is a very safe man?" Nothing more passed, but each thus asked understood that if he voted for Schlosser he would become a marked man: if he were a plain professor he would never become a Geheimer Hofrath; or if a Geheimer Hofrath, would never become a Geheimrath, and so on.

Some one else was appointed, and nothing more was heard of the matter. Even in Baden, with all the liberal tendencies of the Grand Duke, it might have been difficult for Schlosser to have taken the free course he did, if he and his wife had not been independent, with no children to depend on the favour of the Government for future progress. Though a personal friend of the Dowager Grand Duchess, Schlosser was not a Geheimrath, only a Geheimer Hofrath, though he was one of the men who made Heidelberg what it then was—one of the most distinguished Universities of Germany. Schlosser was naturally, from his political opinions, a great admirer of England. He always feared that if the House of Commons were ever to attempt to interfere with the patronage and government of India directly, there would be great danger of demoralisation to the House of Commons, disaster in India, and ruin to both countries. He was a man of such powerful character, strong opinions, and decided political views, that it would have been difficult for him, in a country where there was political life, to remain the purely impartial historian that he was. He

would inevitably have become involved in politics. He once said to me, "Whatever you do in England, Mr. Rathbone, don't make your professors into statesmen. They will ruin you, if you do." He was then alluding to Thiers' misleading influence over French politics and opinion. When I saw him again later, I think about 1848 or 1849, his views had been curiously borne out, for Thiers and Guizot in France, Hasenflug in Cassel, and Bache in Austria, had nearly been the ruin of their respective countries.

A few extracts from his correspondence at the time may fill out this picture of life at Heidelberg in 1839, and help to show what kind of young man he was when he took part in it.

To his Mother

Heidelberg, *October* 24, 1838.

We are now settled in our winter quarters, and I suppose you wish to know what they are like. We have a large sitting-room — eight yards by six yards — into which two airy bedrooms open, with cupboards, drawers, etc. For these rooms we pay only ten florins per month, which will be £4 : 10s. for the five months we shall stay here. . . .

We have presented all our letters of introduction : the first we presented was to Mr. Fries, the banker here, who received us very kindly and gave us the best advice he could ; and some of it very good. We then went to Professor Schlosser, who received us as warmly as possible, gave us some very good advice, and offered to lend us any of his books or explain after the lectures anything we

might not understand, and lent us a book to enable us to understand his lectures, and said we should come to him when we wanted any advice about getting books, etc. . . . The next day we went to call on Tiedemann,[1] whom we found in the garret of a garden-house, with a room full of smoke, a box full of ashes from his tobacco pipe, and a parrot with the most squeaking voice I ever heard—like a badly-oiled wheel. He received us the least warmly of any one, though also kindly. But he was evidently engaged in study; so after hearing his advice we took our departure as soon as possible. We then went to call on Muncke, who received us most warmly, inquired after Dr. Trail and his family most particularly, also about Mr. Scoresby; said that the Professors were so much engaged that we must not look to them for much society (any society the Professors have, I expect we shall be in); gave us his advice most openly, as indeed did all the others; said he hoped to have the pleasure of introducing us to his family, and was as kind as possible. We afterwards presented Mr. Voelker's letter to Mr. Winter, who is a respectable bookseller here. We have met with so much kindness from every one since we left home that we are in danger of being spoiled.

November 4, 1838.

Our lectures begin to-morrow; the courses we attend are a little varied from what we at first intended. . . . We find that there is no one here who can be recommended for Moral Philosophy. We have given it up, as we find that without it we shall have quite enough, as the addition of a foreign language will help to confuse us;

[1] Friedrich Tiedemann (1781-1861), Professor of Medicine and Physiology.

and if we studied many more things we should get completely confused. When we dined with Professor Schlosser he introduced us to a young man for whom he said he could vouch, and I think he does not run much danger in so doing. Ashton declares he is now quite satisfied that we came to Germany (he was not so before), as it was worth coming to Germany to know Wetsell. He is studying the same things as ourselves, intending to be a professor. He at once offered to help us by all means in his power, and on further acquaintance we find that not a little. Finding that we were fond of Schiller he offered to come whenever he had an hour to spare, and after having explained anything we might not have understood in our reading, or read some with us when we liked it, to spend the rest of the time in reading Don Carlos. He has already come for three hours, and the other evening we drank tea with him, when he showed us how to take notes, told us what we should want and what we should avoid, and has been as kind to us as possible. You will begin to be afraid we are striking up a very strong friendship on a week's acquaintance, but we had, first, Schlosser's guarantee, and next, his own advice to us and his conversation. He is a philanthropist, interested and well-informed; he is a religious man, feels deeply on the subject and that of religious tolerance; and last, not least, he is a man who keeps his own self-respect and knows what is due to it, and he prefers dwelling on the good to the other side of things. He says we must not judge of Germans by Heidelberg, as we do not by any means see the best part of them there—the young men being very rough, and the ladies, as at the other Universities, rather forward in their manners. He has given us an invitation to go with him after the session to his native place, Hesse,

and he will do his best to show us a little German society. Of Schlosser we hear from all hands the highest account, but an equally universal account of the difficulty of understanding his lectures.

The courses we are attending will, I expect, be very interesting, if we can understand them and keep up with our notes. Schlosser's Middle Ages and the Eighteenth Century will be about the most interesting subjects we could have had. His style of *writing*, though rather involved, is very short. The part of it—his History—that we have yet read, is a sort of essence of History, but we hear that in speaking he often loses himself in the length of his sentences, and is obliged to leave them unfinished. Zacharia speaks very slowly, and if one may judge from the little we have read of his book, both the style and matter of his lectures will be very good. His book is so beautiful that I have been almost tempted to attempt the translation, both to impress it on my own mind, and because I think its conciseness (it is in one small octavo) and its beauty, if I could give a moderately literal translation, would please Papa very much. The course is on Naturrecht or Natural Law. We should like to have attended many other courses, but I shall be quite content if we find we can keep well up with what we have undertaken.

I cannot write comfortably till I hear what is going on at home, as in a one-sided correspondence I have always, in spite of what I may know to the contrary, a sort of feeling as if what I was writing might not be welcome.

We hear of wars and rumours of wars, but we do not know how much to believe of them. It was not till the other day that we heard by accident that Lord Durham

had resigned. We have now become subscribers to a news-room here, where a paper published in Paris is taken, and where we can see something of what is going on in the world; but we hope soon to get an *Examiner* regularly, which will keep us up—with what we get from our letters—with what is going on in the world.

To his Brother, S. G. Rathbone

Heidelberg, *November* 18, 1838.

"Sir, you are a humbug," as Mr. Pickwick said when warming himself before the fire in the Club-room. Did you really suppose I was not up to you, or had never seen you cut a sheet of paper smaller that your letter might appear larger? Another time do not curtail the dimensions of your paper, please; and choose a larger sheet, and get some one else to fill it up. I suppose you follow the example of the other Sam writing to his Mary, and so time your letter that "she may vish there vas more." But the old proverb held in your case—"Short and sweet," for your letter contained a great deal of information, and I was very much obliged to you for it, and it had the desired effect, for "I vish there vas more," and shall be very grateful for more whenever you can spare time to write. You need not be afraid of giving me too much, for I am a complete glutton for letters. Oh Sam, I saw a dog the other day would have suited you: he was as ugly as Sin, a sort of mixture between a slate and rat colour, smooth hair, long ears, and a curled tail. His hair was rather short: it looked as if it had been shaved; he was a "reglar pictur'." I wish you could join us here, you would like it very much. You might fish or shoot as much as you liked, and we are

in the middle of most beautiful scenery. The students are the coolest fellows I ever saw. One of them told me he had to fight a duel. I asked him when. He said he did not exactly know, in a fortnight or month; he had never fought before, and was taking fighting lessons. Rather cool, I guess.

It is here allowed for a man to sell his body to the College, so that when he dies it may be used for dissection. One man did them nicely: he sold them his body, and then jumped over the bridge into the water; so that had they waited a few days they would have had his body without paying for it, for all suicides are given for dissection.

We had a tea-party last night of three students who came to read Schiller together, and we had a very pleasant evening. . . . We might have most beautiful walks here if we had time for it. To-day, though a dull, damp, blowing day, with some showers, after church we went up to the top of one of the hills and had a very good view; that is to say, what we could see looked very fine, for the gloom of the day suited well the wintry appearance of the country.

You should see what dinners the Germans eat. They first take a quantity of soup, then a pile of boiled beef, then a beef-steak or veal cutlet, and about four or five different kinds of vegetables, then pudding, then fish, then some made dish, then venison or game and salad, and finish off with a dessert—all washed down with a pint of wine and accompanied with not a small portion of bread; and they do not only eat a scrap of each dish, I can assure you. And for this dinner, wine and all, you only pay one-and-fourpence. Their cookery is, however, very wholesome, though a great deal of butter is used. . . .

To his Mother

November 18, 1838.

Our second week at College is over ; with some things I am more, with others less satisfied than before. We have got to read quicker, but fifteen volumes have been added to the books we had before to read—no small addition when our reading goes at the rate of ten pages an hour. Schlosser's lectures I like as well as I did at first ; they are exactly what we want, and what I am afraid we could not get in England—a philosophic view of History and the way to study it, by a man who loves freedom, who has seen a good deal of men and the world, and who is entirely unconnected with any party, and enamoured with no particular form of government. Zacharia has not been quite so interesting this week. But we could hardly expect all his lectures to be an essence of the principle and laws of morality and legislation, as his first were. His lectures are always interesting, and (perhaps it may seem absurd in me to say even this much, but) they appear to me sound and founded on the right principles. . . .

November 23, 1838.

I saw a genuine German student of the old school yesterday, and he gave us some rather odd accounts of their goings on in the good times. Among other things he gave us a rather strange account of the burial of a German student. He was pretty well known, so they determined to give him a student's burial. It was by torch-light, and eight hundred of the students attended, each with a large torch. A student read the Service, and students lowered the coffin into the grave. The pro-

cession then moved on past the grave, the students walking two and two, and each couple as they passed, dividing at the grave, broke two bottles of beer together, letting the beer and glass fall into the grave. Each threw some earth on the grave and passed on. They then sang together (accompanied by a military band which had played the whole time) a German students' song—I think it began, "Es ist uns ein Bruder verloren"—and marched off again two and two, accompanied by the band playing a march. When they came to the Place before the College several of the Professors were standing there; they saluted them as they passed, and they did what they call, I think, throwing the torches, *i.e.* all at once they throw the blazing torches into the air so as to describe a circle; and I believe the effect of a number of blazing torches thrown in this way is beautiful in the extreme. All this sounds very strange, but the German students in those times were a queer set. What they call the Corps then contained about eight hundred men, and were partly political bodies. Now they are merely drinking and fighting ones, and contain only about one hundred. Two of a corps or Corpbrüders never fight together.

November 25, 1838.

The state of things here is indeed very different from what it is with us. England may almost be called the land of Practice, and Germany the land of Theory. The beauty and perfection of their theories in comparison with their practice, as far as we can judge, are very striking; though we are hardly fair judges, as we are not acquainted with the same class of men in England. Schlosser is a most extraordinary man. He studies from morning till night now, but formerly he mixed a good

deal in the world and saw a good many of the events he is now treating of in his modern history, and has had extraordinary opportunities of conversing with many of the men active in the scenes, or those who had the best means of knowing. He now writes from his study, totally unconnected with any political party (for there are, to speak properly, no politics in Baden), and without a cause to even slightly distort or misrepresent things to his own mind, as he has no particular theories of his own to support, and is not fond of drawing character strongly marked and making the actions fall in accordance with the character he has drawn. . . . We heard an opinion the other day, which, coming from such an authority as a Jurist, is rather remarkable. Zacharia said, "After fifty years' study of the science of right, I have come to the conclusion that the punishment of death is not rechtmäsig" (that is, just, according to the law of right), "though it may be necessary in a less advanced state of civilisation." I wish Zacharia's book had been in English—you would have liked it very much; he is so clear, and begins from the first and noblest principles of right, and reasons out. It is a singular thing the Germans are not a free nation. They have the principles of freedom so clearly laid before them by such men as Schlosser and Zacharia; for instance, the latter's definition of the sole aim of Law: "To establish for man a theatre on which to act as a moral being." But I must not begin to quote, for I may as well sit down at once to write you his dictations and his book as attempt to pick out the beautiful passages and noble principles contained in them. It will be a pleasure when I return, to talk over and discuss what I have heard. How slight a cause changes the course of human events! Had we arrived two days later, or had

Mr. Melly not given me the letter he did, had a thousand other things occurred, we should have now most likely been behindhand and unhappy, and perhaps attending courses not worth hearing. As it is, I am almost more hopeful than ever. It would have been worth coming if it were only to receive so much kindness, for it makes one think better of one's species and increases a man's willingness to pay the debt he owes to his kind; in other words, to seek his own happiness in his duty. Thursday was an academical holiday and there was a procession, but it was nothing particular. In the evening there was a ball, to which we went. Any gentleman may ask any lady, and she has no power of refusal unless engaged. This cannot be quite agreeable. They waltzed furiously fast, *i.e.* not in the rate of the music, but in the quantity of ground they went over. The waltzes were arranged differently from anything I ever saw before. The waltzers arranged themselves round the room, and a steward went round and motioned to those who were to begin, setting as many in motion as had plenty of room, and stopped them when they had danced a certain time, seeing thus that everybody waltzed their share and that the circle was kept up. I feel always rather foolish, not being able to waltz. Tell Sam to learn that among his other accomplishments, as, if he ever comes to Germany—and even in England—he will need it.

Our diary would generally be:—Got up at six or half-past; read till eight; breakfasted and went to Muncke's lecture; came back and read till one; dined and read, or had German lesson, till three; three to four Zacharia's lecture (four days a week); went home and read till six; Schlosser six to seven; got Wetsell to look over and correct our dictations (which he does every evening

before his tea); went home; tea; translated and wrote out our dictations, which generally takes us to from half-past nine to half-past ten or eleven; translate some of Zacharia's books; read a chapter in the Bible to quieten our minds, and go to bed. The books we are reading are Schlosser's *History*, that part concerning the Middle Ages, with an abstract for repeating; Schlosser's *Napoleon;* Bignon's *History of France since the* 18 *Brumaire* (1800), and we shall have to refer occasionally to La Valette and D'Aure; Zacharia, 3 vol. of his forty books *Vom Staate* (of the State), and sometime's Muncke's *Nat. Phil.* We have plenty more books to read had we time, but we have as much as we shall do well. Is there any good English History of the period from 1800?

To his Father

December 2, 1838.

I am glad you are satisfied with my letters, as written in an evening when I was often very sleepy, and as I have never had time to read them over again, I am afraid they have been very incorrect and unconnected epistles, and have stood in need of many charitable allowances. I hope you will be able to find a school suitable for Sam and Henry, as I confess it seems to me almost a pity that when Sam has got a taste for study he should go into an office before he has made a little use of it. I know for my own part how difficult it was after returning fatigued (as the youngest in an office always must) from my day's work, to sit down and read, particularly as there was no one reading with me with whom to discuss what I was reading. Sam, again, will have a difficulty I never had. Bessie and Mary are no longer at home.

He will have no companion till I come back. He will not therefore be able to stand aloof if he does not at once see those whom he might entirely like as friends; and when an intimacy is once formed, even the best feelings of our nature are against breaking it. If you find no school that suits him, could he not go into your office for three or four hours a day, or even from nine till three, and take private lessons and read the remainder? Mr. Thom would perhaps give him a little help. It would be also an advantage when he first went among entire strangers, to have some one to whom he might express perfectly openly his opinion of persons and things, and tell everything that occurred. Expression gives a clearness to thoughts, feelings, and principles, and clearness takes away half the danger of wrong. I confess the most feasible plan seems to me the one I mentioned above. Sam has not a decided bent for reading, but will read when the necessity is put before him. Again, he is too good-natured to repel advances, though he may dislike the character of the person making them. He cannot keep a person at a distance. He will laugh at a joke, forgetting that it gives the person making it a step as it were to familiarity, and will perhaps return it. I know what you will think: that my being at home would hardly help the matter, that my intolerance and over-bearingness would perhaps do more harm than good. I have long seen the evil. The habit, as it were, is broken, and I hope it will not return on my return. I feel as if rather longer than six weeks had passed over me since I left home. My respect for others will, I hope, increase daily. Formerly, even in spite of that, there was perfect openness between us, and I do not think Sam ever avoided telling me anything, and we shall, I hope, agree still

better when I return. Then we shall read together, which will increase the interest for us both, and prevent either of us from losing our good habits. I have found it very difficult to take to studying again. If no other plan turns up, could he not join us here? There are capital classes for all ages, and he might learn a good deal. You will, I am afraid, think me conceited in giving an opinion, but I, of course, only can judge from—or rather only mention—the difficulties and disadvantages I have found, and which, it seems to me, will be increased for Sam by Bessie's and Mary's absence. Sam has the materials for a noble character; but materials for good are also materials for evil, and the first steps are everything, and to have a friend of a person's own age is so powerful an influence. If I have spoken too strongly on the subject—"Out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh." Please let me hear when it is decided what is to be done with Sam, as I shall be very anxious till I hear. . . .

I did not expect you would be very much encouraged on looking into business matters, but I had hoped the banks would have suffered by their last year's transactions enough to sicken them of such irregular courses. The dearness of corn would make the tea trade even worse than before, and I suppose we shall have to wait quietly till things return to their proper channel. It seems to me as if in America things would be very long before they did so, as (though certainly not if we calculate happiness, but perhaps if we take *mere money*) America I should think was the gainer,[1] as the American debts of those that fail are generally so much more punctually paid to American creditors than to the English ones, and they have always

[1] *i.e* by the crisis of 1837.

the use of a large sum of English capital, which, if they were more honest and the laws more just, might be of great use to them, as it might be secured on property there. It seems to me quite legitimate that the English having more capital than they can use at home should employ part in America; and perhaps the use the capital may be to Americans may for some time so nearly (as far as worldly prosperity goes) counterbalance the evil of an uncertain credit as to prevent them from seeing for some years that honesty is the best policy, which, however, they must ultimately find out.

January 20, 1839.

One of the Professors here is a very odd fish, Zacharia. He dresses in Hessian boots, a coat bought from the Jews, and which has seen many seasons, and a hat!—I have never seen an Irish beggar with a worse. One day on his walk he took off his hat and sat down on a bank, laying it on the bank beside him; a peasant passing looked on him with great compassion and dropped a 6 Kreuzer (2d.) into his hat. Zacharia said nothing, but quietly pocketed the money. Another time, at dusk, a soldier stopped him and asked him if he had a Wanderbuch (what the travelling mechanics are obliged to carry). Zacharia replied that he had not, and the officer took him into custody. Zacharia said nothing. Presently they met another soldier, who asked if he knew whom he had got—it was the Geheimer Rath (Member of the Privy Council) Zacharia. The man was in great trouble. "But," he said, "you did not tell me who you were." "You did not ask me; you asked me if I had a Wanderbuch, and I said I had not."

To W. R., in Heidelberg, from S. G. R.

Monday, February 11, 1839.

I wish you many happy returns of your birthday. I had no idea it was your twentieth—I thought you were only eighteen; and if you look proportionally old, as you informed us in one of your letters, you will have some right to claim respect from Philip and me.

I intended to have answered your letter the Sunday before last, and yesterday for that matter; but Sunday was meant for a day of rest, and after dinner I generally read with Mama first thing, and then everybody else looks so sleepy that I go to sleep, and when I wake I go to take a walk to wake up, and when I come in it wants so little off five that I never think it worth while sitting down to write, and so each Sunday passes by without my writing to you, and that is why I have not answered your letter sooner. . . .

I suppose you will have heard a full account of the *Controfussy* as Philip calls it.[1] Mr. Thom's lecture will take place to-morrow. As yet the Evangelicks have made but a very indifferent figure, and even their own side say they never saw truth put in so uninviting a form and error in so tempting a one. The Low Church disclaim them, and say they're none of their champions, and that if they go on they will ruin a good cause. I expect you will take quite a fancy to turning when you come home, when you see what nice things can be made with such little trouble. I am not going to have the trunk of the elm for my boat, as it was worth a great deal, and was so immense that twelve men could hardly stir it. The storm has done more damage at Greenbank than many

[1] See p. 66.

years can make up, and the elm makes a great gap. I slept through the whole of it, and was not aware it had been blowing at all till on drawing up my blind I saw the elm covering the lawn.

The two friends left Heidelberg about March 18, 1839, and travelled to Stuttgart and Munich in an Express Coach (Eilwagen), which covered the ground at the modest rate of five miles an hour. Thence they made their way into Italy, where they spent six weeks, seeing the same buildings and pictures that a tourist of to-day sees, but a very different Italian people.

ROME, *April* 16, 1839.

We have now seen most of the principal sights of Rome, the Villa Borghese excepted, which we shall see to-morrow or the next day. We shall now try to see those things we have liked best over again. Rome has not at all disappointed me, though I have not found it all that I expected. The ruins are much more ruins than I expected. A pillar or a stone or two in many places are the only marks of what has been ; as most of the rest has been used in other buildings. Most of the pillars, too, have been transported into the churches. The columns that remained were most of them half-covered with earth until the French excavated them, and had the French stayed here a little longer they would have made Rome a much finer city than it is now. The Popes spend their money on spoiling St. Peter's in the Holy Week by hanging it all over with silk and bedecking it with gilt ornaments.

The Papal Government is one of the greatest abuses still existing on the earth. There is a woman who is expected to be guillotined day by day for the murder of her husband. She has been five years in prison. It is two years since she was condemned, and the case has been passing through the other tribunals during that time. There was one man guillotined not long ago who had been ten years in prison. These two facts are enough of themselves to stamp a Government as atrocious. We came too late to Rome to see any society. All the parties are over, and, as a Londoner would say, "everybody" left Rome after the Holy Week. The people seem employed and to work hard, and, freed from superstition and the Popes' government, I do not see why they should not be again a fine nation. They want principle, I am afraid, and many of the other Italians are boasters and cowards, as was proved by the poor resistance they made in their feint of an insurrection. The breaking up of Austria, if that should ever take place, would give them a help. But I am afraid the transition could not be made without long civil wars, as they are jealous of one another, every one wishing to be the first.

FLORENCE, *May* 1839.

Europe altogether seems in a very unsettled state, and I do not think things can remain anywhere long as they are. Germany in many places is ripe for a change. So are Lombardy and the Roman States. Sicily is almost in a state of revolution. In France the King and people are at war. In England it seems almost as if the Queen and people would not for long agree with the Lords as at present constituted; while Canada and the West and East Indies seem inclined to keep our hands full out of

doors. In America the Slave Question seems likely to give them plenty to do, to say nothing of their commercial affairs, which appear to me in a state which can hardly last. England seems to have in the distance a heavy reckoning for all her iniquities. In the East, as one wrong entails another, she will most likely have to conquer one native prince after another, and even reduce Persia under her government. This will increase her expenses and the number of places, *i.e.* the temptation to and means of corruption ; and it will be years before India can stand for herself. In the West Indies and Canada we are already reaping what we have sown. Owing to our narrow policy we are gradually being pushed out of the best markets of the Continent, and pressed down by the enormous weight of our National Debt on the one hand. We are cramped, on the other hand, from taking vigorous measures to counteract all these evils by Pitt's other legacy of the upstart aristocracy ; and now when energy and talent throughout the country seem rather inclined to go to sleep, we look on complacently at what has been done, forgetting how much was needed, particularly the leaders. The doctrine of expediency and study of tactics are, I am afraid, too much attended to by the Whigs. With all the faults of the Middle Ages, they had vigour.

William's return to England was clouded by the death of his grandmother, Hannah Mary Rathbone, the central domestic deity of the family. He had been among the most devout of her worshippers, and during his apprenticeship scarcely a day had passed that he did not pay her

a visit, hitching up his pony at the gate of Woodcroft Cottage, as he rode home from the office. Thirty years after her husband's death, her remains were laid by his in the Friends' Burial Ground in Hunter Street.

As it was thought desirable for the young man to see something of business in a large London house, his father arranged with Mr. Joshua Bates, then the senior partner of the London firm of Messrs. Baring Brothers, to take him into their office.

"This was a most important year in my life, full of very hard and varied work, but of perfect health, and freedom from anxiety or disturbance or worry of any kind. The office hours were from ten o'clock in the morning till five or six, for four days in the week; but on Tuesdays and Fridays—foreign post-days—the clerks all had tea at the office, and remained till they had finished their work. I saw a great deal of the business of the office, by letting my fellow-clerks know that I was willing to take any one's work in addition to my own, during their holidays, for experience' sake. I made it a rule never to go out more than two evenings a week, and, of course, it was only occasionally that I went out as often, and I read the other evenings. Each of the junior clerks had an account-current book to make up at the end of the year, and as I was one of the youngest, the

largest fell to my lot. From their mode of charging interest, the making up of the year's accounts was a very laborious task; but I was determined not to be beaten, and by working at it night after night, except when I had an engagement, I finished it before any of the others."

Mr. Bates had the knack of seeing everything without appearing to take any trouble to do so. His letters to Mr. William Rathbone, senior, show that he had formed a good opinion of his junior clerk's abilities, and in the spring of 1841 he proposed to take him on a business tour in America. The opportunity of seeing American social and commercial life as he would see it in the company of Mr. Bates—an American by birth and a member of the leading financial house of England—was too good to be missed, and the offer was gratefully accepted. The letter in which it was communicated to William by his father is too characteristic to be omitted.

Private.

LIVERPOOL, *March* 13, 1841.

MY DEAR WILLIAM—Mr. Bates desires me to request that you will not mention in the counting-house what I have now at his desire to communicate to you, lest it should unnecessarily wound the feelings of some of your companions, who may think they ought to have the preference. He mentioned the subject of your going

with him to America when here, but I said I would not mention it to you until he had first spoken to you or made up his mind on the subject,—which I expressed the hope that he would do without at all feeling fettered in his decision by having spoken to me. I said I was sure such a plan would be most gratifying to you, and that the advantages of the plan were so obvious and manifold that it did not require a moment's thought or hesitation, and that if the offer was repeated I should most gratefully accept it at once. He writes me word to write at once to you, as the time is short, to prepare for your voyage. Let this be done as quietly and with as little fuss as can be expected from a young man who has such an agreeable prospect before him. If I am not mistaken, the way in which you receive the information and set about your preparations will be watched and a judgment be formed accordingly, and most important it is that the starting impression should be favourable. To affect not to appear gratified would be a deceit, and anything but creditable; but on the other hand, to show that it does not distract your attention from the business of the counting-house,—that you even on first knowing it receive it with a quiet self-composure, arrange your plans with method, and carry them out like a man of business, prepared for any emergency, however unexpected,—this will be very desirable.

It will be an anxious time with me. This close and unreserved contact with Mr. Bates for so long a time will serve either to shake or to confirm your estimation with Mr. Bates, and require a discipline and tact for which you have hitherto had little opportunity of preparing, and which will therefore almost certainly at times leave you at fault. On the one hand, you will have to guard against

being ostentatiously and uneasily afraid of being in the way; on the other hand, to be actively on the alert to perceive when you may be really so. . . . Never wish to make yourself appear wiser than you really are. A young man of twenty-two will not be expected to have the knowledge and experience of a man like Mr. B. with all his opportunities. Do not fear therefore to speak of plans which he might at once say were impracticable. Above all, do not be tenacious and self-vindicating; admit frankly and freely when you may have been mistaken; cultivate the feeling, and let it be apparent that your object is to *learn*, that you are conscious you have yet much to learn, and that information and truth are what you seek. If you have information to give, let it be communicated deferentially and as very probable to have been known before by the party to whom you speak; this will give an air of reality, of sobriety of purpose, and of modest self-appreciation, which invariably secure confidence and respect, when the real stuff is not wanting. If I am not wrongly informed, the Americans are very sensitive as regards others, and quick to discern the characteristics of a gentleman really such, and to appreciate a sound judgment and a well-informed man. Avoid the Slave Question: of course I do not and cannot wish you, whatever may be the cost, to be insincere, to utter one sentiment you do not feel; but sincerity is quite consistent with the remembrance that you are in America to *form* your own opinions, not to *give* them; that you want the knowledge and experience which alone can justify any one in being tenacious and dogmatical in their opinions. I believe you will always find the most sensible and best-informed men the most deferential and humble, because they know enough

to be aware how much yet remains to be known. Whatever may be the despotism of *our laws*, I suspect you will find that the despotism of public opinion in America leaves less of freedom in conversation than in this country; that if, therefore, you wish to get on comfortably, it will require great prudence and circumspection, and that at first, at any event, it will be best rather to *listen* than speak. All this may be accomplished, and it may be fully apparent that a man is conscious of his own position, has his own views, and a firmness of principle to maintain them and to act in consistency with them. . . .

I fear you will think this a long prose, and perhaps unnecessary; yet you will pardon the anxiety that has little left to wish but to see you and Sam fairly under way, and able to provide for yourselves and take care of others, and then to leave the helm to—as I trust it will prove—abler hands, to say God speed, and leave the coast clear. . . .

Arrange in your own mind the subjects on which to speak to Mr B., which will save his time and show that you feel it is of value; be brief as is consistent with obtaining the information needed. In my London canvass of Members I was taught this lesson, and ever after found the full benefit of keeping it in mind at all times and seasons;—Harvey and myself often gained admittance and attention when the confused and long-winded were either refused or kept waiting. . . .—Your affectionate Father, W. RATHBONE.

In April the travellers started from Bristol, in the *Great Western*. That stay in America lasted four months, during which they travelled about

much, and were entertained everywhere they went. In Washington, the President, Mr Tyler, gave an evening party in honour of Mr. Bates. Although this was to be only the first of several visits to America, it was the one to which William Rathbone's memory recurred the most in later life, and it is evident that what, at that susceptible age, he observed and learnt of American methods, and no less, perhaps, what he absorbed of the character and business principles of Mr. Bates, did much to form his opinions on many questions, though as regards the former source, the lesson was one of warning as often as of example.

The country was then going through a period of commercial depression and financial disaster. Five years before, President Jackson had succeeded, after a bitter struggle, in overthrowing the National Bank, and his policy, besides indirectly producing the great crisis of 1837, had encouraged the up-growth of a host of banks, managed upon the vicious system then almost universal in America. William Rathbone's letters are full of allusions to this state of affairs.

The great evil of the country is the number and style of its banks; one-dollar notes in the North and shinplasters for sixpence upwards in the South deluge the land, while in Pennsylvania, the richest state in the Union, the state *relieves* (?) the banks from the compulsory part of their charter, on the faith in which their

debts were contracted, and allows them to defraud their creditors for some years, providing they will lend the Government a certain sum of money; in other words, a *bribe*. Is there anything in the history of despotism more disreputable than this? I hope, however, that in the northern part of the States, at least, this swindle is reprobated, though not perhaps as much as it deserves. To give you some idea of the state of the currency of the states south of Pennsylvania, the notes of a railroad company circulate as freely as any others. They are in the following form: "Transfer to etc. etc. 12½ cents (6¼d.) in Baltimore City 5 per cent stock, notes for an amount exceeding 100 dollars being presented at once, etc. etc." This, you see, does not pretend to pay the notes in specie, but only to transfer to the holder a depreciated stock.

The remedy that occurred to him was a Bankruptcy Law, which it should not be in the power of individual states to repeal, extending to corporations, and obliging the banks to either pay their liabilities on demand or wind up their affairs.

In spite, then, of his admiration for the natural resources and for many of the characteristics of the country, he "is not surprised at people coming home from America more of Tories than they left it." "Certainly, though a republic may be a very fine form of government, a democracy, as far as we may judge from the United States, is the next worst thing to a despotism. The race between parties is so severe that principles

are lost sight of. I am no favourer now of shortening the duration of Parliaments, which would probably have the effect of making representatives mere tools of the lowest parts of the community. It is very difficult, however, to distinguish here between the effects of the institution and those of the youth of the country." With regard to the personal question of commercial prospects, he made the shrewd observation—one which, I am told, subsequent experience has amply verified—that the American business seemed so simple and easy to carry on without sufficient funds to justify it that it would probably always be overdone.

While passing through Philadelphia he had the good fortune to hear one of Daniel Webster's great speeches advocating Protection. It was very plausible, but was somewhat balked of its effect by an amusing instance of American journalistic ingenuity.

An hour after its delivery all the newsboys were calling over Philadelphia, "Daniel Webster's great speech on Free Trade and Protection"; but the Protectionists were dismayed at reading a most powerful, eloquent speech on Free Trade, denouncing the evils of Protection. It was a speech delivered by Mr. Webster some years before, when he and Americans generally were in favour of Free Trade. Indeed, at that time most Americans professed to be in principle Free-Traders; the manufacturers only asked for what they called

"incidental Protection" in the taxes necessary to raise revenue, and that only while their manufacturing system was still in its infancy. While we were in America the news came of Lord John Russell's proposal to substitute for the old Corn Law an eight shillings fixed duty. The Americans were astounded at the boldness of the proposal, considering our heavy debt and taxation. "Free Trade," they said, "was for a new country like America, with its unlimited, undeveloped natural resources; but how could England, with its heavy taxation, compete with other countries without Protection?" To this I replied that having a heavy burden to carry, it did not seem to me that to put ourselves in fetters was the right way to enable us to carry it.

This visit and two subsequent visits to America made of William Rathbone a strong and uncompromising Free-Trader alike on economic and on moral grounds. He found there three separate effects of Protection which, as it seemed to him, inevitably follow the system, in a greater or less degree, wherever it prevails. First, the alternation of periods of great prosperity among the wage-earning class, with periods, often of longer duration, of extreme stagnation and distress, when the over-production and accumulations of the prosperous period—exaggerated as they are by the profits of protected industries—have overwhelmed the limited market to be found within the walls of the tariff, and can only be disposed of abroad, if at all, at a ruinous loss. Secondly, the growth of inordinately

large fortunes among employers, a comparatively small number of whom are often able to monopolise a closely protected industry. These accumulations of wealth, too vast to be greatly impaired by bad times, must, even in the hands of wise and public-spirited individuals, become dangerously conspicuous when scarcity of work and distress give the labouring class, by whose aid they have been built up, the leisure and the temptation to dwell upon them; while, in the hands of those who set no bounds to their ostentatious luxury, they become an irresistible stimulant, if not a justification, of social revolt. Lastly, to the pressure brought to bear on those responsible for tariff legislation, both in the Government and in Congress, by these accumulations of wealth, and to the scramble, in the lobbies of the Capitol, between various manufacturing interests for the adjustment of duties in their favour, he attributed much, if not most, of the corruption in some departments of political life in America.[1]

From the time of this, his earliest opportunity of studying Protection at close quarters, to the end of his life, he attributed to these fruits of the system the fact that the working-class of Free-Trade England have been, even in periods of

[1] The influence notoriously exercised in the United States Senate by certain groups of capitalists during the last decade, must be held to confirm the soundness of these opinions.

industrial depression, comparatively free from the more dangerous manifestations of discontent, and immune from the ideas of communism and anarchism to be found more or less in every protected country.

CHAPTER III

GETTING AND SPENDING

"In all things to serve from the lowest station upward is necessary. To restrict yourself to a trade is best. For the narrow mind, whatever he attempts is still a trade; for the higher, an art; and the highest, in doing one thing does all; or, to speak less paradoxically, in the one thing which he does rightly, he sees the likeness of all that is done rightly."—GOETHE.

Soon after his return from America, William Rathbone was made a partner in his father's firm of Messrs. Rathbone Brothers and Co., and his life as a Liverpool merchant began in earnest. For the next fifteen years there is little in it to record of general interest. Perhaps he was harder worked during those years than at any other time of his life; but for that very reason he had not time for many public interests, and as he was seldom absent from Liverpool, except on short holidays, his correspondence was presumably small. At any rate, very little of it has been preserved. His position in business was one involving a good deal of anxiety and responsibility for a young man

of twenty-three. His uncle had retired from the firm, and his father had been for many years so engrossed in political and municipal work as to be unable to carry out the changes in methods, or to undertake the new forms of business made desirable by the great expansion which had taken place in the American trade between 1826 and 1836. The credit of the house stood as high as ever, but in the amount of its business it had not kept its place relatively to its competitors. It was quite clear to the young man, who had, it may be said briefly, the instincts of a born member of the now practically obsolete calling of merchant, that if he and his brother were ever to be in a position to take the share which their father and grandfather had taken in the public life of the town, they would have to devote themselves entirely for some years to building up the business of the house. The necessity was one he never seriously regretted. Great as was his own zeal in later life for public work, he felt that for young men compulsory drudgery at their own business, with payment by results, was a more wholesome training than either politics or philanthropy with their inevitable accompaniments of a facile conspicuousness and exaggerated praise.

He was soon joined in the work by his brother Samuel. S. G. Rathbone had been made an apprentice in his father's office at seventeen, but

before he had completed his apprenticeship or had come of age, he was sent to China, to join his brother's former school-fellow, young James Worthington, in establishing a house there. China had then just been thrown open to foreign traders. Having carried out this responsible commission with a skill, tact, and success which justified the bold choice of so young a man, he returned to England by way of India, coasting up from Ceylon to Calcutta, thence up country to Benares and Agra, and down to Bombay, and so home. This took him through a part of India then almost unknown, and gave him some curious glimpses into the rule of the East India Company, of which upon the whole he formed a high opinion. Their servants then had the country practically to themselves. Even they kept to certain well-known routes, and part of his road from Calcutta to Bombay had, he was told, been traversed before by only one European traveller, Lord Elphinstone. On his return home he was taken into partnership with his father and brother, and with the exception of another long visit to China in 1846, his work lay thenceforward mainly with the Liverpool house.

The two brothers were well suited to work together. The friendship between them was very close, but they were different enough to supplement each other. S. G. Rathbone was of a much more

cautious and reserved temperament than his brother. His judgment was very clear and sound, and he was firm in holding to and acting on his opinions; but he was never in a hurry to express them or to force them on others. He was singularly fair-minded and observant, not only of the rights, but of the feelings and prejudices of those with whom he worked. Yet his attention to their wishes evidently sprang from a sense of justice, and a feeling that among colleagues "each should count for one, and no one for more than one," rather than from any tendency to over-rate the value of their opinion. There was indeed something about the expression of his grey eyes, with lids deeply drooping at the outer corners, which, to those who noticed it, must have carried instant conviction that he was not a man likely to mistake geese for swans, and that if he obviously thought little of himself, it was not because he over-rated the greatness and wisdom of the majority of mankind. His humour was one of his most characteristic and delightful traits. It seldom effervesced into epigram, but found vent in an habitual vein of gentle irony, which pervaded nearly all his conversation with his intimates, but was rarely allowed to appear in the committee room. At work he had a power of holding himself in reserve until every one else had said his say, and then coming forward with a proposal which

showed that all their arguments had been weighed and a solution sought which met them as far as possible. This judicial quality of his mind was keenly appreciated by his brother William, who rarely took any important step or decision without consulting him. Even after middle life, when they were engaged in different kinds of public work, the one in politics and social reform, the other in the organisation of elementary education, this close intercourse was kept up.

William Rathbone's own impulsive and dynamic temperament made such a judicious adviser especially valuable to him. In the early forties it is clear that his high principles, unselfishness of purpose, and great strength of will, had already made themselves recognised in his circle, but it was only by degrees that he learnt to direct his powers so as to call out and stimulate, not restrain those of others. In business, as his mother reminds him in one of her letters, "when people have to walk together the quicker natures must moderate their pace, or others are left behind, or stumble forward at a rate too fast to walk steadily." Seeing things quickly, clearly, and strongly, and absorbed in anxiety that the right course should be taken, it was very difficult to him to leave to less prompt and ardent natures the share in making a decision which as fellow-workers was rightly theirs. If the matter under discussion were one he thought

important, above all, if it involved not only points of immediate expediency, but principles upon which future actions would hang, then his whole mind and will would be concentrated upon the effort to reach a right decision. In such a mood he had not much attention to spare, at least at the moment, for the impression which his bearing was making upon the other persons in the case, and being himself not easily depressed by opposition, and entirely free from anxiety as to his own share of credit or dignity, he was apt to assume an equal buoyancy and an equal self-detachment in them. As his experience widened there was no mistake which he was more anxiously on his guard against than this. He always remained superficially rather inobservant, in the sense in which most people are inobservant at times when their minds are not, so to speak, sight-seeing, or on the look-out for a job, but are occupied with definite and engrossing questions. His mind was nearly always so occupied, except when he was on his holidays, and he had not the skin-sensitiveness to what was passing in other people's minds which serves some men in the place of conscious observation. But it is clear that he had from the beginning the moral constituent of tact, the desire and purpose to be considerate, and fair-minded, and respectful to the individuality of others,—and as life went on, he strove with a success which varied, but seemed

always to increase, and perhaps most rapidly towards the close, to learn the ways in which tact manifests itself.

The necessity of giving to all he worked with the fullest credit, not only in his own mind, but publicly, for everything good they had done, or if they had done nothing, then for the best intentions, was one upon which his mind, or more truly perhaps his moral bent, especially fastened. It appealed to his sense of justice; but besides that, it was, as a point of diplomacy, very important to a man whose work was to lie so much in breaking into the peace of committees or individuals with proposals which not only promised to be troublesome, but implied, however tacitly, a criticism upon past performance. Often his enthusiasm carried him quite unconsciously beyond the limits of strict justice in his appreciation of his fellow-workers' merits; and when he was occupied with some large new scheme or reform, his friends were sometimes amused by his expedients for dragging to the front the colleagues or official persons who might have, but had not, set it in train, and by his endeavours to persuade them, the world, but most of all himself, that they were the real motive power, he only the instrument or go-between.

Even as a young man his unselfconsciousness and a certain impetuosity of manner had probably made him seem more masterful and self-reliant

than he really was. So far from being satisfied with his own strength, he was in fact fond almost to excess of taking advice, and few people could trust themselves to the guidance of others with a more whole-hearted confidence than he could on occasion to those whose judgment he had once learned to respect. Unreserved and unhesitating acceptance of the best light upon a subject that he could see, whether it proceeded from his own reason and experience or that of other men, was the principle upon which he usually acted, and it was, it can scarcely be doubted, one great secret of his effectiveness. While others were doubting and hesitating over a needed reform, or a proposed new enterprise, waiting till a perfectly safe path to it should appear, and meanwhile jogging comfortably along in the old ways, his quick eye had singled out the route across country which offered the safest going and fewest obstacles, and he was in full career along it. Such promptness to act obviously had its dangers, but with him it did not mean that he was acting upon a chance impulse, or for the sake of a temporary expediency. In every kind of work with which he had much to do he had the habit of laying down for himself general principles of action. He formed these very carefully and deliberately, but when once formed, he did not lightly reconsider them, and without reconsideration scarcely ever departed from them. Thus,

when the time came to act, the main lines upon which, or at least the limits within which, his course could be shaped were always determined, and the most formidable barrier to action—uncertainty about general principles—being removed, the rest was comparatively easy.

The early years given entirely to business in William Rathbone's life illustrate, as clearly as any of the long years of public activity which followed them, his determination not to allow his life to drift, but to conduct it upon a settled plan. Before he finally took his place in his father's office he had made up his mind, as private memoranda left behind him show, that in order to fulfil the possibilities which he saw for himself, it was necessary that he should command a fairly ample fortune. He had no taste for personal luxury, and a strong sense of the duty of frugality. But he had observed that in England especially, the weight which was given to a man's words or principles was greatly determined by the skill which he had shown in managing his own affairs, and that this skill, in the case at any rate of men of business, was inevitably roughly measured by the amount of his wealth. He saw, too, that in the spheres of work to which his father's and grandfather's example, as well as his own tastes, pointed him, a considerable command of money was, not indeed necessary, but undoubtedly a great assistance. But both upon

the extent of this aim and upon the methods he took to compass it he set very definite limits. Great wealth he did not desire. It involved, he thought, too much danger of enervation to a man's self and still more to his children.

One who was closely associated with him in business many years later, has supplied me with some notes upon his characteristics as a man of business. In these he says :

In guiding the policy of his firm, a reputation for stability and absolutely sound principles were what he chiefly aimed at, preferring the continuance of a firm from generation to generation to a sudden outburst of great prosperity. He abhorred short cuts to fortune, and had a rooted contempt for what Americans call quick rich firms. He trusted no prosperity that was not the outcome of continuous and laborious work ; he avoided openings that might lead to such prosperity, knowing that for one firm which succeeds in business of this type, there are ninety-nine which sooner or later it brings to the ground. He himself was just one of those who probably would have achieved this unusual success, because with great enterprise and optimism he combined a remarkably level head, and would always stop well before the climax. This almost intuitive knowledge, bred of his long experience, clung to him to the end of his life. In numbers of cases he warned his friends of what he saw coming, and on practically all occasions when they did not follow his advice they had great reason for regretting it.

Yet in spite of his caution and dislike of anything

approaching gambling, his optimism and cheerful disposition made him very strong as an initiator. Perhaps one of his most remarkable qualities, at least the one most apparent to those who knew him only in his later life, was his wonderful adaptability. If he had remained in business to within a year or two of the end of his life he would probably have been just as successful under the changed state of things as he had been in the fifties. He was able in a moment to grasp a business problem of the new school, put a finger on the weak part in the argument, and give most excellent advice. Sometimes his opinion was a little premature, but it was nearly always right sooner or later, and generally sooner.

As a partner his practice was to accumulate all the information and evidence he could, think out quietly the trend of things, and when he was satisfied with his conclusions, order his policy accordingly. In this, however, he never rode roughshod over those associated with him. He was always very ready to hear what his friends had to say, and set great store on the judgment of those he trusted. He would always give way in minor points, but was equally firm where he believed the issue was of great importance. He was a good judge of men and a firm believer in the differentiation of work. He once said that his principle in all business affairs, commercial or otherwise, was "never do anything yourself that you can get done for you at the rate of £500 a year." But he knew the value of details, was an expert accountant, and could quickly detect the flaw in any carelessly drawn balance sheet or financial statement. Philanthropist though he was in the highest and noblest sense, he was a firm believer that philanthropy should not be mixed up with business. Thus he never approved of an account

which he believed unsound being continued for philanthropic reasons; better let it stand or fall on its own merits purely; better for all concerned. But if a firm had to be pulled up, it was well known whence came the assistance and help that individuals received. Usually, however, he was able to bring the necessary pressure to bear in time to save his own money and the concern itself. His view was that as many disasters in business were due to mistaken kindness as to wild speculation, and far more to leniency than to harshness. As long as he remained in active business he gave his full working time to his firm, reserving what spare time he could snatch exclusively for honorary work. He disbelieved in the expediency of holding directorships while engaged in active business, and he used to try to dissuade young men with whom he had to do from entering on a combination of functions commonly considered not only compatible, but mutually helpful.

In his private jottings (written, it should be remembered, for his children and without any idea that they would ever be published) he has noticed some incidents of his very early business life which illustrate well these characteristics of his later age:

When public attention began to be devoted to railways, my father's friend, A. M., said to me one day, "Your London friends, M., P. and Co., and others, are among those who are bringing out the North of France Railroad. Why don't you apply for shares? They are sure to go to a large premium, and they would certainly give you some." I thanked him

for his advice, saying I did not know whether we had much capital to spare to hold railway shares with, but that I would consult my father. After consultation we agreed that we could perhaps spare £5000, and applied accordingly, but only got 100 shares of, I think, £10 each. At any rate they at once rose to £5 per share premium. Soon afterwards, meeting A. M., he asked me whether we had not sold our shares. I told him I did not know that we should be acting fairly to our friends to do so, as I supposed they had been allotted to us as likely to prove solid holders, and to hold on to them for some time at least. He said that our friends would expect us to sell, and would sell a great part of their own, as soon as they could make a better investment of their money. Accordingly I sold, and we pocketed £500 with much content, but it seemed to me it might be a very insidious and dangerous precedent. I had thought we were well paid if, after working all our waking hours as hard as we could, and knocking about the world, we added £500 a year to the firm's profits; and here, without any work beyond writing a letter, we pocketed £500. I said to my father that if I were like him, the only capitalist partner in the firm, absorbed in politics, and with a very young and inexperienced partner, I should dread allowing my partners to go into the now increasingly profitable and exciting business of applying for new shares. I should require them to confine themselves to their business as merchants. He agreed with me, and it was very fortunate that he did so, for the country was then at the commencement of one of the wildest and most speculative manias I have ever seen. From the novelty of the circumstance that the money was at first spent in the country, no one seemed able to

realise the inevitable result. Being entirely out of the speculation, and fond of working out things to their probable results, it seeemed to me absolutely certain that it could only end in the most disastrous crisis we have ever seen, for the country was undertaking, far beyond its strength, engagements which could not be suddenly terminated, but would continue to tax its resources for years to come. I urged any friends I had who were directors of railways to cease the wild system of competing to buy up or amalgamate all those new schemes, as they were certain to come to grief, and be bought up at a very much smaller price later on. When I urged this on Mr. J. C., then a director of the railway between Liverpool and London, he said he thought I was right, and if I would agree, he would retire from the Board and propose me as his successor. At about twenty-five years of age, I was, of course, very much flattered at such a proposal, but I said that as long as I considered it my duty to give my main efforts to make provisions for my own family, I thought I should do it more effectually by concentrating my efforts and attention on managing my own business, than in helping to manage other people's.

In 1846, I think in August, Mr. Ross Smyth came into the office very anxious about the future of Ireland. He said that in 1845 the potato disease had not mattered much, because it had struck the plant late after the tubers were formed, and a larger portion of them was saved for human food. But in 1846 the disease had struck them so early that the tubers were small and immature, and in many places there would be no crop at all available during the winter. I asked him to try to calculate what import of grain would be necessary on the most economical consumption to supply this loss. He worked it out that

8,000,000 quarters at least would be necessary. As before Free Trade the import of 2,000,000 quarters had been enough to derange the exchange and bring on pressure, I saw at once that even a very considerably less import than he had named must bring on the severe crisis I had considered inevitable sooner or later. I suggested to my father that we should confine our business to the strictest limits, and caution all our friends against extending theirs. My father thought I was in a panic, but I told him I was convinced I was right. He recommended me to go up and talk the matter over with my wise friends in London. This I did, but they all said the money being spent in the country made this expansion different from other ones. I urged that the United Kingdom had always consumed what it produced to eat and drink, that a great part of the money must be given out in wages, and that these would be spent in eating and drinking and wearing more clothes, which, or the materials for which, must be imported from abroad and paid for. Mr. Whittaker, of Brown, Janson, and Co., alone saw the force of my argument, but he pointed out that there had hitherto been no important rise in the prices of produce, and that the rise must take place before increased imports and payment for them could produce the approaching stringency. I saw that he was right, and the whole prospect became perfectly clear to me. I went home. We wrote fully to all our friends and issued a circular on September 15th. We restricted to the smallest compass our credits for advance on produce, and did a small business on our own account on produce which was low, in order to get advantage of the rise when it took place. We also wrote to our friends in China not to send us any bills from houses largely connected with Calcutta, as Mr. Janson's opinion of the Calcutta trade,

and what S. G. Rathbone heard on his way home from China, had convinced us that there was much unsoundness there.

Everything turned out as we anticipated. There was a great fall in the autumn or winter in the price of railway shares; Indian corn rose to seventy shillings a quarter, falling rapidly in 1847, when the 8,000,000 of bread stuffs had been secured. The first of the pressure for money came, as I expected, in the spring, and in October the crisis came on afresh with increased severity, and a great many of the old and reputedly wealthy Calcutta and Mauritius houses came to the ground.

In the first few years the business made little way. Then it took a start. Houses were established in Canton and Shanghai, at first as branches of the Liverpool firm, but afterwards only in correspondence with it. An agency was set up in New York, and the consignment business in ships from America increased. The two brothers joined Mr. Ross Smyth in forming a firm in the grain trade. They also became shipowners. After ten or twelve years' hard and almost unremitting work, William Rathbone was able to relax a little of his attention to his private affairs, and to give a share of his time, at first small, but steadily and rapidly increasing, to public matters.

To an active-minded young man, the calling by which he earns his living is always interesting enough to make him theorise and form a creed for himself upon it. The principles which William

Rathbone held as to how money should be earned were perhaps less unusual than the fact that at an early age he formed equally fixed principles as to how money should be spent.

It seems to have been about the beginning of his married life—while, that is, he was still in his twenties—that he laid down for himself a sort of self-acting rule to determine the proportions of income that should be spent upon public and private uses. This is a personal matter about which instinct and preference suggest saying as little as possible. But the praises, exaggerated and unwholesome as he considered them, which on many occasions during his later years were lavished upon his public expenditure, seem to suggest that the matter is one upon which his authority would have weight, and the record of his opinion may therefore be of some practical use. It will be given as nearly as possible in his own words.

In deciding how to spend his income, he thought, a young man should consider not only the immediate objects of his expenditure, but also its effect on his character. Saving and giving are both habits. It often happens that a man of naturally generous nature is obliged while he is young to work hard and to be economical. He yields to this necessity, hoping when he has made a fortune to use it for the good of others. But by the time success comes he has allowed the saving habits of his youth to

master him so completely that he is affected by a sort of "pecuniary paralysis." This very frequently befalls even men who while poor have been generous in giving on the modest scale suitable to their means, so that it is exceptional to find a man who has grown very wealthy without becoming less generous as his wealth increased. It follows, then, that a man who would escape this moral disease must give something for the sake of practice, even out of small means, and as his income swells (and this was the point he laid most stress on) he must increase not only the *amount*, but the *proportion* of it to be devoted to public objects.

He was fond of defending this maxim on utilitarian grounds, and by an argument which seemed to have a faint echo of the economic law of Diminishing Returns. Imagine the case, he would say, of a young man of business, with a wife and family, and an income of £500 or £700 a year. He finds that every additional £10 which he can afford to spend adds very considerably to the enjoyment of his family and himself. It enables them to take a better holiday, and to indulge in some real and healthy pleasures. But if he increases his expenditure by £500 or £600, still more by £1000 or £2000, the increase in their pleasures and advantages will not be in at all the same proportion. Part of it will almost certainly be spent in satisfying the expectations of Mrs. Grundy as to the style

in which well-to-do people ought to live, part in costly forms of amusement, which, though pleasant, gave little or no more enjoyment than simpler forms. Assuming that the production of happiness is the object of expenditure, then, as an economist might say, he has reached the point at which every fresh dose applied to his particular family field yields a diminished return. This should be a sign to him to divert an increasing proportion of his means to cultivating the broad acres of the common weal. If we suppose that he has begun, as he fairly may, by laying aside ten per cent of his expenditure for objects unconnected with himself and his family, he should increase the percentage as his means increased, until it reaches, if he become very prosperous, say one-half of the total. If he were wise, he would not stop there, but would rather fix a limit beyond which his private expenditure should not go, spending everything that he could afford beyond that limit on objects of public utility. Of course this does not mean that he should necessarily spend the whole portion so allotted during the year. If he did he would probably do a great deal of harm; for wise spending needs much time and thought. But he should keep an account with himself, and consider the balance as a debt which he owes the public. No fear but that to an active citizen opportunities will come in time for spending usefully all that he has accumulated.

His plan, as he was fond of pointing out, has a collateral advantage : it lessens the risk of a man's children being brought up in habits of expenditure which it will be impossible for them to keep up when he is dead and his property has been divided. The necessity to consider ways and means is rather a stimulus than a barrier to happiness in youth, but it may be hard and painful when it is forced, as it so often is, on men and women for the first time after their standards and tastes have been formed in a luxurious home.

There are probably some people who, in reading advice like this, cannot shake off the feeling that in a country in which the great majority of families have incomes of less than £3 a week, it is an anomaly that there should be a class at all to whom six or seven hundred a year represents poverty, or at least the modest competence suitable for young people to begin life on. To these, any system of giving away percentages will only seem to make the best of a state of things which has something fundamentally wrong about it. With this point of view William Rathbone had great sympathy. He sometimes said of himself that he was a Socialist in respect of ends, and would become one out and out if he could see his way clearer as to methods. For the so-called " rights of property," except so far as they fitted in with the interests of the community,

he cared little, and his whole trend of opinion shows that he would have been willing to adopt very drastic measures for securing a more equal distribution, if he could have convinced himself of their practicability and efficacy. The increasing luxury of modern habits of life was to him a cause of abiding soreness and uneasiness, not so much perhaps on the ground of injustice to the poor who did not share them, as of their demoralising and enervating influence on the characters of the well-to-do. But it must be remembered that in forming his "rule" he intended it, not as a counsel of perfection, but as a working principle which might be accepted by men born in a certain position and bred in certain habits, neither prepared to break wholly with custom, nor content to live as selfishly as it permits. It was not an ideal which a man should set before himself, but a line below which he should not allow his conduct to fall. Those who had kept to it might feel that they were at the best but unprofitable servants, who had done that it was their duty to do.

"You should," he once wrote to a young man to whom he had been expounding this plan, "very carefully and constantly keep before your own mind, that in doing this you are simply discharging a trust which there is no merit in discharging, but which it is a sin and disgrace to neglect; and that all the nonsensical rubbish talked about the gener-

osity of those who attempt to do this is a poison to be guarded against and rejected with disgust." Praise of his "munificence," in fact, gave him no pleasure. It does not gratify a man to be praised for paying his tradesmen's bills, or for being temperate in eating and drinking, and he regarded his public expenditure as an almost equally obvious and elementary duty. "It is very easy for a rich man to get the reputation of being generous; almost impossible for him to deserve it," he said once at a public meeting, and the saying was no conventional disclaimer, but the expression of one of his most deep-seated and practical convictions. For his own use he copied out a saying of Emerson's, of which the significance extends far beyond money spending: "If in the hour of severest truth a man were to deal honestly with his soul, he would say that he had never made a sacrifice."

As to the methods and occasions of discharging this debt to the public, William Rathbone's ideas developed with his experience, and they may best be gathered from the story of his own work in its several branches. Here it need only be said that by public expenditure he did not mean simply giving money to charities or to needy individuals. That is one of the forms. But education, science, art, literature, the collection of information on subjects important to public welfare, the trial of promising new schemes of social amelioration, the

supply of healthy pleasures to masses or to individuals—all these offered in his eyes a practically unlimited field for judicious spending.

At the same time, he was very far from underestimating the difficulties of spending even in these ways without doing more harm than good. He felt strongly that if those who spend freely on luxurious living are likely to demoralise themselves and their households, those who give carelessly and foolishly to public objects run the risk of injuring all whom their bounty reaches, and of lowering the whole tone of the community to which they belong.

The account of his efforts to diminish, in his own town at least, the sum of wasted charity must be left to a later chapter. In this, one may seem already to have paid too little regard to chronology, passing in a breath from the practices of youth to the precepts of maturity and age. This will be less done in the later portions of this sketch, though to a certain extent it has been necessary throughout. In describing activities that were not given to a single profession or pursuit, but ranged to and fro over a number of quite distinct fields, it has often seemed better, for the sake of clearness and continuity, to trace out the whole of what was accomplished in one field before passing to the next. The order in which the several branches of his work have been described has been as a rule

the order in which they were undertaken. It was natural that when he first began work upon a new subject it should occupy for a time the forefront of his thoughts, and then, when the limits of what he could hope to do in it made themselves plain, it should fall into the background and become more or less a matter of routine.

One trivial personal experiment in "charity organisation" belongs properly to this time. When William Rathbone first entered his father's office he found that the numbers of applicants for charity who called there was a serious nuisance and impediment to the business. His father, he says, "held very sound opinions on the subject of the evil done to character by relief given without sufficient knowledge," but being very tender-hearted, he could seldom resist sweetening his lectures on the duty of self-reliance by a shilling or half-a-crown. At his son's suggestion he consented to refer all applicants to the office of a local relief society, with instructions to make strict inquiries and to give substantial help when desirable. At the end of a month or two the office was almost cleared of applicants, and of those that persisted so few stood the test of investigation that the amount disbursed on his behalf by the charitable society was under £5 a year.

This was practically the same plan of dealing with charitable claims that he pursued all his life.

He never gave help, and, except in obviously bad cases, very seldom refused it, without careful inquiries made either through agents whom he paid for the work, or from any other available sources, and of these inquiries careful permanent records were kept. When the merits of a case were doubtful he always inclined to give the applicant the benefit of the doubt, and in later years, when he was in close touch with the Liverpool Central Relief Society, and with the London Charity Organisation Society, he specially encouraged the reference to him of cases where the risk of failure seemed so great as not to justify the expenditure of ordinary funds upon them. He was always very willing to risk losing money and even what he valued more, time, provided, first, that the end to be gained was worth the risk, and secondly, that the element of doubt was due to the nature of the case and not to removable deficiencies in information or precaution.

In small personal matters, where the duty of hardening one's heart could not well be fulfilled vicariously, his practice, it must be confessed, fell short of the ideals of the Charity Organisation Society. Like his father, he had probably "very sound opinions" as to the duty of being particular in such matters, but the instinct of liberality was usually too strong for them. Abroad, he must have seemed to hotel-keepers, waiters, and drivers

the very archetype of an Englishman, in the facility with which he permitted himself to be overcharged, as well as in his zeal for walking up hills in the heat of the day. He was one of the very few human beings who positively enjoy tipping. When leaving an hotel he would stand at the door fingering loose coin, and exhorting his party to notice "whether there was not some one else who looked as if they expected something." Of course the obscurities of a foreign tongue did not prevent the desired expression from overspreading the faces of most of the bystanders. The bare possibility of underpaying anybody made him miserable, and when the market price of a service seemed to him inadequate, he quietly set the standard of the market aside. In all such matters, it is to be feared, he was "the sort of man that Simonides would not commend." [1]

[1] "The liberal man, again, is easy to deal with in money matters; it is not hard to cheat him, as he does not value wealth, he is more apt to be vexed at having failed to spend where he ought, than to be pained at having spent where he ought not—the sort of man that Simonides would not commend."—Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.* iv. 1, Peter's translation.

CHAPTER IV

BEGINNINGS OF PUBLIC WORK—1847 TO 1859

On September 6, 1847, William Rathbone married Lucretia Wainwright Gair, the eldest daughter of Mr. Samuel Gair, who had died about a year before. He had been a partner in Messrs. Baring Brothers and Company, in Liverpool, and was an old friend of William Rathbone's father, his house, Penketh, in which his family continued to live after his death, being within half-a-mile of Greenbank. In the autumn of the year following his marriage William Rathbone was obliged to go to America on business, and on this, his third visit, his wife accompanied him. Her parents were both Americans by birth, and she had many relations and friends in New England, with whom she stayed while her husband was travelling about the country seeing to his affairs. His letters from America to his father are full of business, and of reports of visits to mutual friends and correspondents; those to his mother are much taken up with discussions, or

rather with assents to her proposals, as to the best ways of laying out a certain sum, I think a hundred pounds, which he had placed in her hands for charitable purposes—a subject upon which she was lavishing, after her wont, as much conscientious deliberation, shrewd common-sense, and clear judgment, as might have ensured the success of a large business. Three of his letters seem of sufficient interest, in relation either to the subjects they treat of, or to his character, to be quoted :—

To his Father

Savannah, *January* 15, 1849.

This place is an old-fashioned looking town, more like a country town than anything else, and the people seem pleasant, old-fashioned people who take the world easily enough, except, I fancy, when the cotton fever is raging, and then all is bustle. The streets are unpaved, heavy sand; it is built on a "bluff," as they call it, or ridge, and between it and the sea stretches an extent of low marshy ground, part of which is cultivated in rice. The stores lie along the river, and the good folk ride about instead of walking, owing to the warmth and sand, and hitch up their horses, wherever they stop, to places put for the purpose. You see them standing about tied in that manner. The streets are all lined with trees, many of them apparently of great age and considerable size; and a great many of them being the live oak and wild olive, are of course green even now. There is a good deal of social visiting, and the whole community seem on

terms of good fellowship together, but not much gaiety. The planters are, I hear, a very free (sometimes reckless) sort of fellows, very hospitable in a rough sort of a way. I was told a curious instance of this, *à propos* of a place we drove out to on Sunday, about three miles out of town. It bears the marks of having been a magnificent place, splendid avenues of large old trees intersecting one another, with the long moss hanging from all the branches 1 to 3 feet long, looking almost like weeping willows, and yet the branches like oaks. The proprietor was of one of the best and wealthiest families, but was impairing his estate by expenditure and speculations. When a large party were dining with him a fire broke out ; he would not let any of his servants leave the room, and said they might put it out in the kitchen if they could. The fire at last broke into the dining-room, when each guest took a decanter, his glasses and plate, and they adjourned to the lawn and finished their wine, while the splendid house burnt before them. He was unable to rebuild, but became gradually more involved, till he was obliged to sell the estate, except a small plot on which is the family burying-ground. The keeper of this hotel bought it, and is going to convert it into a cemetery on the plan of Mount Auburn.

On Sunday night I went to a church belonging to the blacks, in hopes of hearing a black preacher over ninety years of age, formerly a slave, and knowing little beyond his Bible, which he knows thoroughly. He is a very sensible preacher, and so much respected that Mr. Paddleford said his funeral would be larger, of blacks and whites, than any man's in Savannah. This congregation has 1100 communicants, who are Baptists, and he was so tired with baptizing fifteen in the morning that he could

not appear ; consequently one of the elders, a cooper, a pure negro, conducted the service. They were singing when we entered, and he then read a chapter with great propriety, and added, "Let all of us consider and apply this chapter, and let those who can read, read and consider at home." They then sang again, and he concluded with a short extemporary prayer, simple, earnest, and to the purpose. I was very much pleased, and regretted more than ever the absence of their preacher.

So many of the men of business here live in hotels and boarding-houses that I have seen nothing of the interior of their houses, and I shall go on to Charleston to-morrow night, where I hope to get a better place to write in, and hope to send another letter home by the steamer which takes this. Time seems getting on towards the day of coming home ourselves, and I need not tell you I shall not be very sorry when it does come, though the kindness of people here does as much as can be done to lessen the feeling of being away. . . .

To his Mother

Charleston, *January* 18, 1849.

. . . Many thanks for your most kind, affectionate letter, and most cordially I wish you all the blessings you wish. I look forward with great pleasure to the time, now not, I hope, far distant, when I shall be with you all again with Lucretia. I am sometimes almost angry with myself for being so easily depressed by slight matters when away from her ; but it is difficult, having once enjoyed such a blessing as her almost unvarying cheerfulness, and entirely unvarying gentleness, to do without it. This morning something in the letters about

China put me out, and it required several readings of your kind letters to get over the effect. However, they were in the end successful: it was impossible to withstand the effect of so much kindness and affection. . . . Nor would it be possible for any one after having suffered some trials (even of his own making) to be so flooded with everything that can make life happy—prosperity, health, friends, relations, and wife, all to one's mind—without feeling some grateful feelings arise within him. But until these feelings become principles and actions, I can only consider them as responsibilities, and tremble lest they should pass, and sorrow and trial come before they have been turned to account. You must not mistake expressions for acts. I believe my visit to America has not been without service to me, but I have yet to see on my return whether I have availed of it to some purpose. Merely giving out of our abundance costs hardly an effort. It is only systematic self-denial and effort that prove progress. Till that has been evinced we must not cry "Peace, peace," where there "is no peace." One thing I have learned to appreciate more correctly—the difficulties of others; and I hope to be more careful and more just in consequence.

The more I see, the more I become convinced that Unitarianism, or rather Christianity emancipated from creeds, ought to have produced more effect in the world than it has, and I cannot understand its not having done so. Again, Quakerism seems to me to have much of beauty and truth in it. Could they not be united—that is, the merits of both—in some new sect, which, bringing rich and poor together and in a more compact body, might work great things? I almost wish I were a

Quaker again, if there were Unitarian Quakers as in New York. It seems to me as if much of their machinery might be made a valuable engine to work with. Their conduct in Ireland showed how much truth they must have among them. A religion which *alone* of all the sects kept its members actively and wisely benevolent in such an atmosphere as the south of Ireland, must have the true spirit in it. . . .

The next and last extract has, perhaps, a certain interest of its own. It is sometimes made a reproach against Liverpool that in the American Civil War the sympathies of her men of business were almost universally with the side which English public opinion now agrees to call the wrong side—the side of the South. William Rathbone was an exception to the rule; on the whole, he was distinctly with the North in the war. When this letter was written, however, he was a young man of thirty, more amenable to the influences which made it all along perfectly natural that Liverpool sympathies should lie as they did lie. The town's principal commerce was in cotton with the South. When business took its merchants to America they dealt with Southern traders, were entertained by Southern planters, felt the charm of Southern refinement and patriarchal ways, saw the best side of slavery and heard the case for it from its most respectable exponents. With the North they had less close ties.

To his Mother

Norfolk, Virginia, *February* 15, 1849.

. . . The whole country through which we have been lately travelling is cultivated entirely by slaves, as you know, and I have made a point of talking with all the most intelligent slaveholders I have met, and I always found them perfectly willing to discuss it fairly, and not in the least sore with your opinions, provided you let them see in the commencement that you considered the whole question as their business, not ours. I believe throughout Virginia, Kentucky, and Maryland slavery would be abolished at once if they could get rid of the blacks when emancipated, but they one and all are sincere believers in the impossibility of doing any good with free blacks. Further south many really contend for the institution of slavery as favourable for the development of black civilisation, and point with pride to the care taken of them and the kind feelings which, in a majority of cases, subsist between the slave and his master. As an animal, I really believe the slave of a great part of America has as large a share of animal enjoyment and freedom from misery as the labouring population of any part of the world; but the absence of motive is as great an evil, I think, as it has ever been represented to be, except with those immediately around the master, with whom personal attachment supplies it in many cases. And yet, in the present state of feeling between the two races, I must confess I should look with some anxiety to any sudden emancipation; for, treated and considered as a degraded race, I fear they would justify their character. It seems to me now almost certain that slavery will not be allowed

to extend into the new territories, and abolished in the district of Columbia (the latter, however, not immediately, perhaps). Even this will be some violation of the constitution, but beyond this the general government has not a shadow of a right to go, each state being supreme in its own boundaries, and the Northern states therefore having no responsibility in any way for slave-holding. Abolition must then be left to the growth of opinion gradually in each state, which is being preceded, in spite of their own laws, by an attempt to educate them. I repeatedly heard public announcements from the pulpit of the meeting of negro schools. Kentucky will probably at once abolish slavery, and in Maryland and Virginia there is a strong party in favour of such a measure. The South are taking the alarm, and I hear it is not improbable that they may soon prohibit themselves the internal transfer of slaves from one state to another, for fear that when Virginia, etc., have sent most of their slaves south they may join the abolition party, and the whole loss of emancipation fall on a few of the Southern states. The slaves thus confined to the old states, and increasing rapidly, will fall in value, and emancipation follow at the instance and with the concurrence of the masters themselves. In Charleston they all complain of the accumulation of blacks in the city. I trust no tumults will force on emancipation suddenly and irritatingly to the master and slave, and the discussion and causes now at work will, I think, soon set it going quite as fast as is for the advantage of either party. I am not surprised to see the bitterness of the South against the North, for I am sure there is great truth in the accusation that their newborn zeal for free soil is to keep the power with the free states and—for that is the great bone of contention—to

keep up the protective tariff. In conversation, this is hardly disguised by them—as one motive. However, selfish motives often work great ends. . . .

He and his wife reached home in the spring of 1849, and soon after settled down in a little house in Wellington Road, close to both their respective homes. Two years later they moved over the water to New Brighton, in Cheshire, to a house on the cliff, overlooking the mouth of the Mersey. This was his home for the next eighteen years. His wife's life was not destined to last so long. Her health was from the first very fragile, although no actual flaw in her constitution was then suspected, and they were obliged to live quietly and to avoid much going into company. This was probably an advantage as well for his health as for hers, for the strain on him during the next ten years was very heavy. His business was increasing and pushing out fresh branches in the ways I have described, and as he was admittedly the initiating and organising member of the firm, the lion's share of work and responsibility fell upon him.

Besides this, he was taking a gradually increasing share in matters outside his business. From 1849 onwards he visited a district weekly for the District Provident Society, calling from door to door in a few streets to collect the penny and sixpenny savings of the poor. This work, in

its small way, was as useful and appropriate an introduction as he could have found to the fifty years' social service[1] which followed it. His district covered some of the alleys and courts round about Lime Street, then as now one of the poorest and lowest quarters of Liverpool. Visiting as he did the same set of families from week to week, and in many cases from year to year, he learnt something of the homes, the habits, and the difficulties of the very poor. He saw them under normal conditions, and as the Provident Society then undertook also the work of a relief society, he was brought into still closer contact with them in times of sickness and distress. All this was of great value to him in his future work in the organisation of nursing, in the administration of charity and the poor law, and in the reform of local government. It supplied the basis of detailed personal experience, which is so much needed to give solidity and relevance to a man's conceptions and utterances on these difficult subjects, and to preserve him from doctrinarianism. It taught him the truth on which he so often afterwards insisted, that three-fourths of the actual material

[1] The phrases in common use to describe generally the pursuits which occupied much of William Rathbone's life,—"philanthropy," "charitable work," "social reform," even the vaguer "public work,"—have such a ring of cant about them that I can only vacillate between them. The reader can choose whichever he finds least distasteful.

help needed by the poor is given them by the poor, and it showed him where neighbourly kindness stopped short and there was need for trained intelligence, for organisation and legislation to step in. Some of the incidents he witnessed made a painful impression. The sight of a drunken mother pouring gin down her baby's throat was never forgotten. He once entered a court to find every individual in it—men, women, and children—more or less intoxicated. But upon the whole it was the inherent good that shines through the faults of the poor that seems to have made the most impression. In his later days in the House of Commons he sometimes said that while in the company of some of his fellow-members he was often far more tempted to take a low and sordid view of human nature than he had ever been in the slums. Of the work of Provident visiting itself, he told an audience of penny-bank workers, thirty years later, that upon no work he had ever done did he look back with so much certainty that it had done good and not harm.[1]

In 1852 his father and he seem to have agreed

[1] The District Provident Society, now one of the oldest Liverpool societies, still continues its work, though with a steadily diminishing list both of visitors and of subscribers, and still maintains its advantage over more modern facilities for thrift, in that it brings its visitors into regular personal contact with the people in their own homes in a natural way, without suspicion of patronage or taint of almsgiving.

together that it was time he should begin to take a rather more active share in local politics. At the General Election in that year he undertook the charge of the Liberal canvass in the north end of the town. The account of the election and of following events may be given in his own words, but as it casts some reflection upon the conduct of political parties, it is only fair to say that the passage was written in his old age, from memory, without any idea that it would ever be made public. His memory for such matters was, however, as a rule very accurate. The Liberal candidates were Mr. Edward Cardwell and Mr. J. C. Ewart; the Conservatives, Mr. Charles Turner and Mr. W. E. Mackenzie.

It came to my knowledge that there was a large amount of treating going on, and a great number of small bribes in the form of payments of five shillings as a day's wage to every one who chose to claim it for voting Conservative; the Liberal side were absolutely pure, not a penny or a glass of beer being given. We were beaten, but petitioned against the return of Turner and Mackenzie, in the hopes of disfranchising the freemen. Mr. Ronald and I were the petitioners, but the management of the petition fell upon me, advised, or rather directed, by Mr. Rigge, who, however, did not appear professionally in the case. We unseated the two members, but did not succeed in our chief aim — the disfranchisement of the freemen. The petition cost on our side over £8000, and at least the same on the other side. The

Liberal party paid their bills as soon as possible after the conclusion of the Committee, but the Conservatives did not, and thereby brought themselves into disfavour with some of their most energetic and warm supporters. Of course, at the election which immediately followed the success of our petition, the Conservatives won, for the freemen whom we had tried unsuccessfully to disfranchise voted against us. But in the subsequent election their unpaid bills, and the consequent unpopularity of the Conservatives, gave us the victory. The political difficulties arising out of this election, and the knowledge that any corrupt election would be followed by a petition, seemed to have completely purified Liverpool for the time from electoral corruption. Of the degradation which the whole system inflicted upon the freemen I had rather curious evidence in after years. I was investigating some social question in which it came up that the artisans in Liverpool—the shipwrights, carpenters, and others whose laws of trade required a seven years' apprenticeship—did not, as a rule, live in houses of their own to the extent to which classes obtaining much lower wages were in the habit of doing. On inquiring the cause, I was told that they lived in hired houses or rooms, so as to be nearer their work, and to have more time and money for drink. In former days the seven years' apprenticeship made a man a freeman of Liverpool; he was exposed to the degrading influence of the annual election of a mayor, with its free drink ; and it appeared as if, some ten or fifteen years afterwards, the habits then engendered still belonged to the class.

Only three times after the Turner and Mackenzie election was there, to my knowledge, a corrupt election, either municipal or parliamentary, and I regret to say

that a Liberal was the first offender. The Liberals and Conservatives were almost equally divided in the Town Council. A Mr. X. was most anxious to be Mayor, and his friends, by a profuse expenditure of money, carried the election. Retribution was speedy and severe. The next year, Mr. Z.'s friends wished to make him Mayor, and repeated the corrupt practices on the Conservative side. At the next parliamentary election the contest was very severe. The candidates and principal leaders of both parties, I believe, were free from the taint of corruption, but a number of the electors, having again tasted the sweets of bribery, were determined not to vote without a bribe, however small. A Liberal agent, who had had the charge of the witnesses at our petition against Turner and Mackenzie's return, told us that a number of men were determined not to vote without a fee of some sort, that he recognised among them many of the old corrupt voters of the Turner and Mackenzie election, and that £500 would turn the election. We told him that if five shillings would turn the election, we could not, and would not, give it. Two eager and less scrupulous Tory supporters paid the necessary fee, and the election was lost. But we could not consistently dispute the return. The Liberal party had in the election of Mr.—— first set the example of a return to corrupt action. The candidates and leaders of the Conservative party had, we believed, had nothing to do with the corrupt practices, and under such circumstances we did not feel we could ask a committee of the House of Commons to cancel the election. But it was clearly understood that if we ever had a fair case and clean hands again, we would spare no expenditure to cancel a corrupt election, or to punish the bribers; and I believe Liver-

pool has since that time been remarkably pure in its elections.[1]

A start once made, work multiplied apace. He became an active member of the Liberal party in Liverpool; helped Mr. J. P. G. Smith to organise the town upon a system of division of work which was then new but has since become general, and afterwards, upon the retirement of Mr. Smith, became Chairman of the Liberal party. In 1851, as Chairman of the American Chamber of Commerce, he presided over a dinner given to Dudley Field, to celebrate the laying of the first Atlantic Telegraph Cable. A cablegram was received from America during the banquet. In 1856 he became a member of the old Dock Committee of the Corporation, and when the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board was constituted, he was one of its first members. In this capacity he took an active part in resisting what the Board considered the exorbitant demands of Birkenhead. The Birkenhead docks had been a failure, largely owing to the grasping management of speculators, and their adoption was forced on the Liverpool Board on terms which, in the view of William Rathbone and those who thought like him, were very injurious to the public service. He resigned his membership of the Board in 1868.

At the beginning of 1857 he took an active

[1] This was probably written about 1892.

part in a movement of national interest. The winter of 1854-55 had been, it will be remembered, the terrible first winter of the Crimean War. The reports which reached England through war correspondents of the appalling sufferings and losses of the army during those months roused strong and bitter feeling throughout the country, and the demand for an inquiry into the causes brought about the downfall of the Coalition Ministry. When Lord Palmerston became Prime Minister one of his first acts was to send out to the Crimea two commissions—one sanitary, the other to inquire into the commissariat, the department which more than almost any other had broken down. The two Commissariat Commissioners were Sir John M'Neill[1] and Colonel Tulloch.[2] They had introduced many improvements, and their Report, published in the following winter, showed that much of the mortality and sickness from hunger, privation, and cold, were due to preventable blundering, mismanagement, and disorganisation. The worst incidents in the miserable story are well known. The scurvy-stricken soldiers had been fed entirely on salt beef and hard biscuit, though supplies of flour and lime-juice lay untouched on ships in Balaclava harbour, and though live cattle, which might have

[1] The Rt. Hon. Sir John M'Neill (1795-1883), Minister to Persia, 1836.
[2] Sir Alexander M. Tulloch, K.C.B. (1803-1864).

been driven to the front, had actually been tendered for delivery at Balaclava at a less price per pound than was being paid for the salt meat, which had to be carried over the swamps which lay between Balaclava and the trenches. At the time of the worst sufferings from cold, several thousand great-coats lay in store, unissued because it was held that the "Queen's Warrant" did not authorise the issue of great-coats more frequently than once in three years, and only a small portion of the army was entitled to receive them under this rule. The men and horses of some regiments had suffered much more cruelly than others, owing to the dilatoriness and want of resource shown by their officers in providing them with shelter. The men of the Naval Brigade, though encamped furthest from supplies, had suffered least of all, being under the charge of officers who were accustomed to be compelled to take responsibility and exercise ingenuity in foreign ports.

The Commissioners in their Report, although they avoided as far as possible blaming individuals for what was chiefly the fault of a rusty and obsolete system, did impute to certain officers a want of initiation and of resource. The friends of those implicated, who were men of high social as well as military rank, raised an outcry and demanded an inquiry. This was granted. The Government appointed a board of general officers,

none of whom had ever been in the Crimea, who sat at Chelsea, and were known as the Chelsea Commission. Their Report completely exonerated the officers in question, and threw the whole blame upon the failure of the Government department to send out a sufficiency of pressed hay for forage. The country, with the *Times* at its head, utterly refused to accept this verdict, and nick-named the Commission the Whitewashing Commission. The Government practically ignored the Report of Sir John M'Neill and Colonel Tulloch, and although, in answer to a challenge from Mr. Gladstone, Lord Palmerston expressed their full approval of that Report, they quietly assumed that the services of the two commissioners had been gratuitous, and omitted even the most formal acknowledgment of them. It was generally believed in the country that the Commissioners had been too outspoken to please the authorities, and that in view of the powerful interests they had offended, the Government wanted their Report to fall into oblivion. Men were not only indignant on the Commissioners' behalf at the injustice with which they believed them to have been treated: they felt it to be a menace to the veracity and thoroughness of all public servants who might be employed in the future for similar duties.

William Rathbone shared this feeling very strongly. He did not then know Sir John

M'Neill personally, but through a mutual friend, Mr. John Paget, he urged him to reply to the Chelsea Commission. Sir John replied that it was not his business to defend his Report; it was the business of the Government who had accepted it; but he added that if anything compelled him to come forward in the matter, he would certainly speak freely. William Rathbone then determined to force his hand. He asked Mr. Paget to prepare an address to the two Commissioners, expressing gratitude for their services and indignation at the attempts to discredit and suppress their Report. This address, which was very strongly worded both in its laudatory and its condemnatory clauses, he proceeded to carry round to all the principal men in Liverpool, irrespective of their political party—to the Mayor, the Magistrates, the members of the Town Council, the Dock Board, etc. With one exception on each side in politics, every prominent man whom he asked to sign it did so without hesitation. There were in all 120 signatures. Sir John's reply was long and outspoken. He observed drily that the value of the address was enhanced "by its being the only public document I possess which contains an acknowledgment that any service whatever was rendered by the Commissioners," and after repeating the story given above as to the Government dealings with the Report, finishes by a trenchant summing up of

the facts in which lay, and still lies, however variously modern opinion may apportion the blame, the sting of the disasters of that fatal winter.

The most anxious wish of the country, from the Queen to the humblest of her subjects, was to provide the army of the East with all that was necessary to its welfare, and even to its comfort. There was no time, from the commencement to the termination of the war, at which the people of this country were not ready to furnish any amount of funds that might be considered necessary for that purpose. The resources of the country were greater than at any former time: its power to produce every manufactured article that the army could require was such as the world had never before seen; its mercantile marine provided fleets of transports, including its magnificent ocean steamships, such as no other army ever commanded; the resources of the Turkish provinces were found sufficient to supply nearly three times the number of men with abundance of wholesome food for another year without being exhausted; the army occupied the same ground throughout the whole time, and was as stationary as the population of a town. No part of it was ever more than seven miles distant from a secure harbour, and a considerable part was encamped within a mile or two of the port. The allied navies had undisputed command of the sea, so that vessels of all classes navigated it with the same security as in a time of profound peace. Yet the country is expected to believe that, with all these almost boundless resources and these means and facilities, it was impossible, by any exercise of talents, energy, and foresight, to provide either sufficient

food or sufficient clothing for 20,000 or 30,000 men during their first winter in the Crimea.

When the address and the reply were published, the effect was just what William Rathbone had anticipated and wished. The flagging public interest in the subject revived, and tributes conceived in the same spirit as the Liverpool address poured in upon the Commissioners from other towns all over the country. He and his friends requested Mr. Ewart, one of the Members for Liverpool, to move an address to the Queen, praying for some signal recognition of the services of Sir John M'Neill and Colonel Tulloch. Lord Palmerston opposed the motion, declaring the whole controversy to be stale, and belittling the services of the Commissariat Commission ; but the feeling shown in the House was so strong that he yielded with his usual tact, disclaiming any desire "to stand between the generous feelings of the House and the accomplishment of its wishes." The story which some one told William Rathbone was, that until the last moment he intended to persevere in his opposition, when Sir William Hayter, the Liberal Whip, came behind him and whispered that he would be beaten by two to one if he pushed the matter to a division. As a result of the address, Sir John M'Neill was made a Privy Councillor, and Colonel Tulloch a K.C.B.

A letter from Sir John M'Neill to William

Rathbone may be quoted as showing how fully he recognised his indebtedness to the energy of his Liverpool defender.

GRANTON HOUSE, EDINBURGH,
March 14, 1857.

MY DEAR SIR — I am not sure that I have not as good a right to congratulate you as you have to congratulate me on the result of the proceedings in the House of Commons on Mr. Palk's motion. Of this I am convinced, that if you had not moved in the matter that result would not have been attained. It is you who have beaten Lord Panmure upon this question, and I may justly congratulate you on your signal success, because whatever may be the kindness of your personal feelings towards me, I know that your leading motive was regard for our national interests and the public good.

I will not therefore presume to offer you my personal thanks for what is a public service, but I assure you that I justly appreciate your character, and it would, I think, be difficult to give you a stronger assurance of my regard and esteem.

The act of the House of Commons embodying the will and the sentence of the country upon these questions, after full time for consideration and the most ample investigation and discussion, is all that could be desired for the security of the public interests and for my personal satisfaction.—Believe me to be, my dear sir, most sincerely yours, JOHN M'NEILL.

For some time before these events, William Rathbone's health had begun to show signs of breakdown. He had undertaken too great an

amount and variety of work. At all times, during the whole of every day, work of very varied kinds was waiting for him. Constitutionally incapable of giving less than his whole mind to the least thing that he did, the effort involved in withdrawing his attention from one subject and concentrating it upon the next, exhausted him more than continuous labour would have done. He found that he had to be continually whipping his brain up to his work, although when thus stimulated it worked apparently faster and more clearly than before. For two successive years he tried short holidays, in Scotland or abroad, but this proved not enough. His doctor at last told him that he would never be really fit for work again if he did not take a whole year's rest. This threat had its effect. He took a house with shooting and fishing—Cumloden, near Newton Stewart, in the most beautiful part of Galloway—and installed himself there with his family in the spring of 1858.

He was not one of the many busy men who find it next to impossible to take, or at least enjoy, a long holiday. He had plenty of country resources; liked fishing and shooting, riding and walking, but, above all, loved with a sort of passion mountain scenery and wild flowers. His ill-luck as a fisherman was only exceeded by his hopefulness. All his days on a river were, as the old gillie at Cumloden described one of them, days

"fu' of expectation." With him ill-luck was not merely a euphemism for bad fishing, though his skill, I am told, was not remarkable. On one occasion, when he had taken for the season a fishing reputed to be particularly good, he caught two salmon on the evening of his arrival. In the night there was a spate, the mouth of his branch of the river became silted up at the fork, and not another fish was seen in it that season. His neighbours on the other branch had unprecedented sport, and invited him over for an occasional day's fishing among the salmon that should have been his. This was only one among several seasons of equally bad fortune.

At Cumloden no such mischance happened. His summer there was bright and happy. Only towards the close of his stay the shadow of a great cloud fell upon his life.

CHAPTER V

WORK FOR NURSING

"This change [*i.e.* the organisation of skilled nursing] is perhaps the best fruit the past half-century has to show. . . .

"Of all the forms that charity takes, there is hardly one that is so directly successful as district nursing. It is almost true to say that wherever a nurse enters, the standard of life is raised."

CHARLES BOOTH : *Life and Labour*, Final Vol., p. 157.

IN 1859 the greatest sorrow of William Rathbone's life fell upon him. At the beginning of the year his wife's health began suddenly and rapidly to fail. After some weeks spent at a watering-place, they returned home to New Brighton, and thence, when it became certain that she could not survive, he brought her, at her own strong wish, to Greenbank. There, on May 27, she died, leaving her husband with five children, of whom the eldest was ten years and the youngest only a few days old.

To one of his disposition, the only course at such a time was to busy himself in constant and engrossing occupation. He returned to the duties

of his office, from which all zest had departed. But very soon, wishing for more and more absorbing work, and being anxious to do something in memory of his wife and of the happiness of their short married life, he began the work for Nursing with which his name is perhaps most closely associated. He did not wish during his lifetime to connect it with his wife's name by any visible link, but forty years later, when the twilight of his own life was fast drawing in, he asked Mr. Charles Allen, the sculptor, to make a marble bas-relief from a drawing he had of her, and to cut beneath it St. Paul's description of Charity—words of which her character had seemed to him the nearest human embodiment he had ever known. After his death, this bas-relief was placed, as he had directed, in the hall of the Liverpool Training School and Home for Nurses.

His wife had been attended during her last illness by a nurse, Mary Robinson, whose skill had done much to ease her. Seeing how much difference trained nursing could make, even in a home where every comfort and appliance that affection could suggest was provided, William Rathbone began to think what illness must mean in the homes of the poor, where comforts, appliances, and skill were alike wanting. He resolved to try an experiment. He asked Nurse Robinson to engage herself to him for three months, to nurse

poor patients in their own homes in a certain district of Liverpool. She was provided with the most necessary appliances, and arrangements were made for supplying such nourishment and medical comforts as might be required to make her nursing effective. After a month had passed, she came to her employer in tears, and asked to be released from the rest of her engagement. The amount of misery she had to see was, she said, more than she could bear. With some difficulty he persuaded her to go on. At the end of the three months she declared that she would never, if he would keep her on, go back to any other kind of nursing. The good she found herself able to do, and the gratitude of her poor patients, had quite reconciled her to the sadness of her work. Its effects seemed indeed greater than even he had expected. Lives had been saved which, without the nurse's care, would almost certainly have been lost; patients considered chronic had been restored to health; object lessons in the value of cleanliness, order, and fresh air had been given in many homes. More than this, the nurse had—

helped to prevent the moral ruin, the recklessness, the drunkenness, and the crime which so often follow upon hopeless misery. Within the space of a few months she had had two cases in which the wife's sickness had thrown a household into disorder, and the husband, unable to face the wretchedness which he knew not how to remedy, had

taken to drink. The nurse showed what might be done to restore order and to lessen suffering. The husbands, who were well-meaning, industrious men, took heart again, left off drinking, and were saved, together with their families, from the state of utter wretchedness and collapse towards which they were fast drifting when the nurse came to their rescue.[1]

Considering that the success of the experiment was proved, William Rathbone now wished to extend it, and he began looking about for suitable nurses. He very soon found that they were not to be had. He applied to the new "Nightingale Training School" at St. Thomas's Hospital and to the Training School established by the St. John's House Nursing Institution in King's College Hospital. These were then the only hospitals in London which had any regular organisation or school for training nurses. Neither could spare him a single nurse. Those trained by the Nightingale School were all needed for the work of introducing the new system of nursing into hospitals: the King's College nurses were wanted either for the Hospital itself, or for the private patients by whose payments it was in part maintained. He next tried several smaller nursing institutions, but their nurses too were fully employed, and the training they provided was quite inadequate, lasting

[1] *History and Progress of District Nursing*, by William Rathbone, M.P. Macmillan and Co. Much of the substance of the above account is taken from this little book.

only one or two months. He then did what every one interested in the welfare of the sick has done for the past forty years whenever they were in a difficulty—he consulted Miss Florence Nightingale. She suggested that Liverpool had better form a school to train nurses for itself in its own hospital. The principal Liverpool hospital, the Royal Infirmary, had then no facilities for training, and most of its nurses, like those of most hospitals of the day, were women of a rough type, often untrustworthy and intemperate, and, according to the lowest modern standard, inefficient. The Committee were conscious of the need for improvement in this respect, and had made an effort to attract a better class of women by empowering the Matron to offer any that seemed worth it a salary of £16 instead of the usual £10. But the Matron had found only four nurses whom she could trust not to celebrate such a rise in prosperity by getting drunk on quarter-day.

Hearing that William Rathbone was interesting himself in the improvement of nursing, the Committee invited him to become a member of their body. He had been assured beforehand that he would find an irreconcilable opponent of his plans in the Chairman of the Hospital, Mr. Edward Gibbon, who, though devoted to its interests, was known to be intensely conservative in his ideas. He soon found that if slow to

welcome changes, Mr. Gibbon was very loyal and efficient in carrying them out when once convinced that they were really needed. During the next month he accompanied Mr. Gibbon in his official visits to the Hospital, and in their conversation together it soon became clear that the real difficulty in the way of starting a training school was that the Infirmary had not enough suitable accommodation for either nurses or probationers. After many consultations, he made the Committee the following proposal. He undertook to build a Training School and Home for Nurses, and to present it to the Infirmary. It should be managed by a Committee selected entirely from members of the Infirmary Committee. In return, they were merely to pledge themselves to carry on the Training School until it had had a fair trial. If it failed, the building was to become the absolute property of the Infirmary, and might be turned to any use they pleased. The offer was accepted, with the full approval of Mr. Gibbon, as well as, I believe, all the lay and medical authorities of the Hospital.

The planning and building of the Home cost William Rathbone much time and thought. Homes of the kind were then rare, and he wished this one to be a model which would be useful to others. The work brought him one great personal pleasure. It was the beginning of an intimate friendship with Miss Florence Nightingale, upon whose advice he

depended chiefly in the preparation of the plans, and who gave to them, as he said afterwards, as much attention as if she were herself going to be the Superintendent of the School. The choice of a Superintendent was another troublesome and difficult matter. The number of ladies fitted by training as well as character to fill such a post was still extremely small, and all of them seemed already engaged. In the end a lady, Miss Merryweather, was put through a short training at St. Thomas's Hospital, and then placed in command of the School, where she continued for many years to render admirable service.

On July 1, 1862, the nursing of the Infirmary was handed over to the Committee of the new "Liverpool Training School and Home for Nurses," and after a year's work in temporary premises they took possession of their Home in Ashton Street on May 1, 1863. Their work was to provide nurses for three distinct purposes in the following order of priority: first, for the Royal Infirmary; secondly, for poor patients in their own homes; thirdly, for well-to-do private patients. The training was, of course, to be carried on in the wards of the Royal Infirmary.

In the meantime the work of district nursing had been spreading as fast as nurses could be found or trained. By the close of 1865, within six years from the time when Nurse Robinson had first gone

into the homes of the poor, the whole of Liverpool had been divided into eighteen districts, and each district had been placed under the care of a nurse, and of a lady or group of ladies, residents in Liverpool, who undertook to superintend the work of the nurse, to pay for her lodging, and to provide the nourishment and medical comforts needed for patients too poor to provide them for themselves.[1] Salaries were paid by the Training School, and a paid Inspector superintended the work in its professional aspects. The arrangement as to nourishment proved something of a stumbling-block, for although it had been expressly laid down that food and stimulants were only to be given when necessary for the successful treatment of the case, it was found very difficult to get the less efficient of the nurses to observe this limit, and relief-giving in many districts tended to play an unduly prominent, if not an absolutely mischievous part. Thus in one district the amount paid yearly for relief and medical comforts was about £200, including £40 for stimulants alone. This last item was soon cut down. One lady tried the experiment of giving scarcely any stimulants, but abundant milk, with results so good that her example was soon followed

[1] The *Manchester Guardian*, commenting on the above statement, remarked that in Manchester, the first city after Liverpool to introduce district nursing, it had taken twenty-five years to extend the system over half the city.

by all. By degrees the standard of nursing rose, and as the nurses became more interested in the technique of their profession, and the public learned to understand its aims, the temptation to act as relieving officers diminished. At present the amount given in relief is very small, and is said to be strictly accessory to the nursing, the Central Relief Society or parish charities being called in when ordinary charitable help seems necessary.

William Rathbone was the first Honorary Secretary of the new Training School, and much of the work of organising the new districts naturally fell upon him, though, from the first, Mr. Charles Langton and others of the Committee also took a great share in it. Mr. Charles Langton continued for thirty-five years to make it his special care to find lady superintendents for the districts, with a success best attested by the fact that of the ladies on the list in 1898, six[1] had held this office for over thirty years, while in a great number of cases it has been handed on from mother to daughter. The plan of thus giving a real interest in and responsibility for the work to individuals able to support it, has always been one of the marked and most debated features of the Liverpool system, and to its adoption the comparative immunity of Liverpool district nursing from financial cares is

[1] Mrs. W. Rathbone, Mrs. C. Langton, Mrs. H. B. Gilmour, Mrs. Paget, Mrs. G. Holt, Mrs. R. D. Holt (in order of appointment).

greatly due. The professional inspection of the work was in 1876 strengthened by the appointment of a matron for each group of nurses, and by degrees the groups were, at Mr. Langton's suggestion, all gathered together into district homes.

In order to see for himself exactly how the system was working, William Rathbone, at an early stage in its history, took the place of one of the Lady Superintendents during her absence for about a year, going with the nurse weekly to visit her patients, overlooking her accounts, and so forth. Many years afterwards, a colleague who sat with him on the Committee of an institution charged with the organisation of district nursing on a very large scale, made the remark that he was the one male member of the Committee who knew what the homes of the poor were actually like, and what nurses could be expected to do, and did do, in them. This knowledge he probably picked up while acting as "Lady Superintendent" in Liverpool, as well as during his still earlier experiences as a visitor for the District Provident Society.

The experience at the time set him on the track of another much-needed reform in nursing. It often happened that the nurse was called in to cases which for one reason or another could not be satisfactorily treated at home, yet were too

prolonged or hopeless to be accepted at a general hospital. The proper place for such cases was clearly the Parish Infirmary, but of this he found that the respectable poor had such a horror, that they would endure almost any suffering and neglect at home rather than enter its doors. This he felt must mean that something was wrong with the Infirmary, and he began to inquire what the defect was. The Liverpool Select Vestry of that day had the reputation of being a rather energetic and efficient body, as boards of guardians go. Their Infirmary on Brownlow Hill was one of the largest in England, and gloomy as it looks from the outside, it still serves the purposes of a highly organised modern hospital and training school, and was then better in structure and appliances than most of its kind. The medical officers were encouraged to apply to the Vestry for everything they needed in the way of diet and medical comforts for their sick people. But there was not in the building, nor it is believed in any other Parish Infirmary in England, a single trained nurse. Its twelve hundred sick persons, in every stage of nearly every illness under the sun, a large proportion of them incurable, or very old and entirely helpless, were nursed—if it could be called nursing—by pauper women selected from the adult wards of the workhouse. Now, as every one knows who knows anything of workhouses, able-bodied

women very rarely enter them unless there is something wrong with them either mentally or morally. In a seaport like Liverpool the workhouse women were of an especially low and vicious type. Their work was superintended by a very small number of paid but untrained parish officers, who were in the habit, it was said, of wearing kid gloves in the wards to protect their hands. At night a policeman patrolled some of the wards to keep order, while others, in which the inmates were too sick or infirm to make disturbance, were locked up and left unvisited all night.

These facts, which seemed amply to account for the popular abhorrence of the Infirmary, were told William Rathbone by his friend, Mr. John Cropper, then Chairman of the Select Vestry. Mr. Cropper saw the faults of the system plainly, but he did not think it would be possible to get the Vestry to introduce trained nursing on account of the expense. For a time the matter dropped. The rest may be told in William Rathbone's own words :

One mail-day Mr. Cropper came down to my office and urged me to go with him at once to the Workhouse, as I should find the Government Inspector and the Governor of the Workhouse there in consultation together. I told him it was mail-day and it would be very inconvenient to me to leave my office then ; besides,

he himself had told me that it was impossible to introduce reform. The only reply was: "Come; it is your best chance." So I went; and we found the Governor, Mr. Carr, and the Poor Law Inspector, Mr. Cane, in one of the underground passages of the Workhouse. The Governor at once admitted that the state of the Workhouse was most unsatisfactory as to the nursing department, or rather, as to the want of nursing; but, like Mr. Cropper, he feared that the Vestry would not stand the expense of what they would consider as, after all, an experiment; and it was agreed that, being responsible for the hospital, they would not like to give any power of interference from without. But the Governor declared himself very willing to do what he could towards promoting reform. Mr. Cane also was very helpful.

The proposal I made was that we should get from Miss Nightingale a set of trained nurses, say about a dozen; that there should be in addition to these about the same number of probationers of the same class that they had in St. Thomas's Hospital and in the Liverpool Infirmary; and that the remaining nurses should be taken from the able-bodied women in the Workhouse; that the latter should be taken off the books as paupers and paid a small salary, say £5 a year, and given better food, in the hope that out of them we might make or find at least some good nurses. About this latter part of the scheme Mr. Carr was not at all hopeful—but he was quite willing to try the plan on that footing, and he estimated that the increased expense to the Vestry would be —— a year. I then proposed that without any one except Mr. Cane, Mr. Cropper, and Mr. Carr knowing anything of the matter, a proposal should be laid before the Vestry, either by Mr. Cropper or Mr. Carr, that a

man whose name should not be known to the Vestry, and who should have no power of interference of any sort or kind, was willing to place in their hands [the sum named by Mr. Carr] to meet the expense of trying the experiment for three years, the Vestry having absolute and uncontrolled management of it. This was agreed to.

The proposal was duly brought before the Vestry, but it seemed by no means certain to be accepted. The doubt hung entirely on the point of expense. The offer to provide funds met it only temporarily: if the experiment succeeded, the rates would have eventually to bear the cost. The supporters of the plan urged that the cheapest way to treat the sick was the way that cured them; and that the expense of the new system would be repaid "by curing people more quickly, by curing those who might otherwise become chronic cases, by enabling those to resume their work who must otherwise have remained or died, and by thus diminishing the duration or amount of that part of pauperism which is the result of sickness."[1] Evidence was collected from the authorities of hospitals which already had trained nursing, and it was all in favour of this view. Mr. Hagger, the Vestry Clerk, focussed the question at issue very neatly when he asked the "Senior Honorary" at St. Thomas's: "If you had to cure the sick by contract at so much a head, and had to choose

[1] *Workhouse Nursing: the Story of a Successful Experiment.* 1867.

between unpaid pauper nurses allotted to you gratis, or paying yourself for skilled nurses, which would you choose?" "To pay for skilled nurses, certainly,"[1] was the unhesitating answer, which much impressed the Vestry. The whole discussion is interesting chiefly because it marks so vividly the change which has come over average opinion between then and now, when excessive care for the ratepayer's purse is seldom, at least in large towns, one of the lions in the path of the Poor Law reformer. Finally, it was decided that the new system should be given a trial, at first in the male wards only, but in other respects in practically the form William Rathbone had suggested.

On the 16th of May 1865 the male wards were put under the charge of a Lady Superintendent, twelve nurses from St. Thomas's, eighteen probationers, and fifty-four of the old pauper nurses. At this point the central figure in the story of this episode in nursing reform ceases to be that of William Rathbone and becomes the new Lady Superintendent, Miss Agnes Jones. Her work in Liverpool was ended by her death less than three years later. An account of it has been published elsewhere, but something must be said here, both to finish the story and because his achievement in finding her and bringing her to

[1] *Workhouse Nursing: the Story of a Successful Experiment.* 1867.

Liverpool was the one fact in the whole affair on which William Rathbone was accustomed to dwell with pride as well as satisfaction.

He had tried to get her four years earlier as Superintendent of the new Training School at the Royal Infirmary. She was then being trained at Kaiserswerth, an institution for deaconesses on the Rhine, and was surrounded by those who like herself were ardent Evangelicals. She knew that he was a Unitarian, and her reply to his letter breathed a somewhat uncompromising spirit :— "You sent me the ground-plan of the building, but I would ask, Is its foundation and corner-stone to be Christ and Him crucified, the only Saviour. . . . I shall not embark in any work whose great aim is not obedience to the command: 'Preach the gospel to every creature.'" The Committee, most of whom were Churchmen, felt with him that if she talked in that way to the doctors, it might increase the difficulty of carrying out an already difficult experiment, and the negotiation was allowed to drop. Miss Jones went to work at a Bible Mission in London. But the instinct to nurse was too strong, and at last in 1862 she made up her mind to enter St. Thomas's Hospital as a Nightingale probationer. She had had an interview with William Rathbone some time before. The idea that at St. Thomas's she would have as associates women who at that time

were not of the same social habits, nor as a body distinctively Evangelical, seemed to be very repugnant to her. "Do you think," asked her heretical friend simply, "that you will be as much among your inferiors as Christ was when He was with His disciples?" The question seems to have made a deep impression. When he saw her next her year's training was over. She had been living in contact with people of broader views and a larger experience, and her bearing was much changed. The central motive of her life and work was the same, but the religious phraseology was no longer obtruded, and she was willing to submit, though no doubt it was a severe trial, to the restrictions which it was necessary to impose on the head of a great workhouse infirmary, with a large proportion of Roman Catholic inmates. In spite of these restrictions she was able to gain an extraordinarily strong personal influence over her nurses, and over many of the roughest and wildest of her patients.

Her position was an extremely difficult one, and in some respects it did not become easier as time went on. One of the officials who had at first given her valuable support had taken to evil ways and did all he could to thwart her. The discipline of the workhouse had become exceedingly lax; the infirmary was so crowded that the patients had sometimes to sleep three in one bed;

a large number of them were malingerers, able-bodied men with sore arms or legs, which they took very good care should not get well, in order that they might continue to enjoy hospital diet and idleness. Miss Jones at last got rid of these by persuading the Governor to institute a labour test. Within a month 200 took their discharge, saying that if they had to work, they might as well work outside. The experiment of training the female paupers as a kind of under-nurses proved, as the Governor had predicted, a dead failure, serving only to suggest painful reflections as to what must have been the sufferings of the poor creatures who for so long had been trusted entirely to their tender mercies. The moment the eyes of the superior nurses were off them, they would leave their work to cluster round the fire and make and drink tea; while they lost no opportunity of getting at stronger liquors. Out of 141 who were tried, even Miss Jones's exceptional powers of training and influencing did not produce a single tolerable nurse. At the end of the first year the experiment was abandoned, and the women sent back to the workhouse, from which most of them promptly took their discharge.

At the end of the second year the verdict of all the authorities of the parish was unanimously in favour of the new system. The Vestry decided to extend it at once to the rest of the Infirmary,

and to charge the cost upon the rates. They refused any further contribution from the unknown promoter of the scheme, and invited him, through Mr. Cropper, to meet them and help them to develop it. Thus it was that William Rathbone became a member of the Select Vestry, upon which he continued to serve for the rest of his life.

Before the third year was over, on February 19, 1868, Agnes Jones fell a victim to an attack of typhus fever which over-work and over-anxiety had left her too weak to battle through. But her work as pioneer was done. The nurses trained in her school were able to carry it on, though at first under infinite difficulties, and the system of trained nursing spread quickly to parish hospitals all over the country.

"Both in this case" — so ends the private memorandum upon which most of the above is based—"and in that of the introduction of trained nursing into the Royal Infirmary and the districts of Liverpool, I was told that the thing was impossible by people of no ordinary energy and determination. In both cases, by acting on Miss Dix's[1]

[1] Miss Dorothea Dix, the remarkable Boston lady who procured the reform of lunatic asylums in nearly every state of the United States and in several countries in Europe, including the Papal States and Turkey, was an old friend of William Rathbone's father and mother, and spent several long visits at Greenbank. See *Life of Dorothea Dix*, published by Houghton, Mifflin, and Company.

principle of going straight to the persons whose duty it was, and who had the power to put things right, with a practical plan of doing so in my hand, I found that the very powers who were supposed to render reform impossible were those who themselves welcomed and adopted and thoroughly and loyally carried it out."

What follows belongs properly to the later part of William Rathbone's life, but the subject is one that stands in a sense by itself, and for the sake of continuity it seems best dealt with here.

In 1874, Sir Edmund Lechmere and others, connected with the English Branch of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, desired to start an organisation for District Nursing in London. In response to their invitation the late Duke of Westminster consented to join in the movement, on condition that the scheme should be arranged under the best expert advice and on the most business-like footing. Being aware of the success of the work in Liverpool, he consulted William Rathbone, then a member of Parliament and resident in London for half the year. As a result of these conferences, a meeting was held in June 1874, at which the National Association for Providing Trained Nurses for the Sick Poor came into being. The Association immediately appointed a sub-committee, whose main objects, as described in the words of

the resolution defining its duties, were: "To inquire into the state and need of district nursing; the training schools already existing capable of training women for nursing the poor in their own homes, and the hospitals suitable for such institutions; the district nurses already at work, and the places where need of nurses is felt."

Of this sub-committee, William Rathbone was appointed chairman, and Lady Strangford and Miss Florence Lees (now Mrs. Dacre Craven), honorary secretaries.[1] The information which they set out to obtain, in the words of their Report, "simply did not exist, and had to be collected by close personal investigation and diligent research."

The Report of the sub-committee was issued in June 1875, and is, in the words of one of the highest authorities on nursing matters, "a turning-point in the history of district nursing." It helped more than anything else to decide that this branch of nursing, in London, and through London in many parts of the country, should run in a broad, well-defined, professional channel, instead of meandering through the countless runnels of parochial and sectarian philanthropy.

[1] Its members also included Dr. H. W. D. Acland (afterwards Sir Henry W. D. Acland, Bart., F.R.S., etc., Regius Professor at Oxford), Sir Rutherford Alcock, K.C.B., Mr. Henry Bonham-Carter, Mr. James Stansfeld (afterwards Sir James Stansfeld, G.C.B.), Dr. Sieveking, and others.

It suggested nearly all the improvements that have been effected since, and in its conception, methods, and conclusions, it is very characteristic of William Rathbone's ways of work and opinions on the subject with which it deals.

The following brief summary of its contents, which readers not specially interested in nursing can easily omit, has been kindly supplied me by an expert.

The Report first defines the object of the National Association, namely, the organising of a system of training and supplying district nurses for the whole country. "In order to learn how this might best be done, the first step was to ascertain clearly the wants, in this respect, of London, and the means by which they might be met. This once thoroughly done, the method of affiliating or combining other Associations, having a similar object, in the several counties and great towns of the kingdom, would be a question presenting comparatively little difficulty,[1] and it is therefore to London chiefly, though not exclusively, that the inquiries of the sub-committee have been directed."

The result of these inquiries is thus described in the Report: "We now know exactly what nursing is done, and by whom, and what training the nurses have had. We know what districts are poorest and most suffering. We know the name and address, the nature and professed character, of the work of every nursing or nurse-training

[1] As a matter of fact, the work of the Association remained chiefly metropolitan, although it did good service to district nursing all over the country, by affording a training-ground for matrons and superintendents.

institution in the capital. We have ascertained in many instances the results of their experience. We have consulted the clergy and the medical officers of every district, and have received from them much information and some useful suggestions. We have seen, through the eyes of a trained nurse[1] of the very highest grade, the actual working of the best-organised district-nursing systems in London and in other towns—their effects, their shortcomings, the difficulties they have to encounter, the means they take to meet those difficulties. The mass of information summed up in the Appendices has taken months of constant, untiring, searching industry to collect; but, now that it is collected, the service it is capable of rendering to those who wish to see their way to forward one of the most important of charities, is well worth both the trouble and the time it has cost."

The "Conclusions" note that there were then only two organisations in London which employed trained nurses in nursing the poor in their own homes. The Bible and Domestic Female Mission, employing fifty-two Bible-women nurses, and the East London Nursing Society, which employed seven district nurses. There were about one hundred nurses employed in such work in London, but of these one-third were untrained, and could be of little service except in the administration of nourishment, medical comforts, and general relief. Secondly, the hospitals, as nurse-training schools, did not afford such means of training nurses for the sick poor at home as ought to satisfy the requirements of the Association. Thirdly, the existing system of district nursing was open to grave objections. The chief faults observed were :—

[1] Miss Florence Lees.

1. Too much relief and too little nursing.

2. Too little control and direction, and consequent lapses into slovenliness and neglect, sometimes dangerous to the very lives of her patients, on the part of the nurse.

3. Too little communication between the nurse and the doctor.

4. Too little instruction given to the patient's friends and family in regard to the care of the sufferer, to ventilation, cleanliness, disinfecting, etc.

The remaining "Conclusions," being the sub-committee's recommendations, may be briefly summarised.

The nurses should receive more complete and systematic hospital training, based on Miss Nightingale's suggestions, to make them real aids to the doctor.

The nurses should work under Inspectors or Superintendents, who should be themselves nurses of higher professional, social, and general qualifications. This measure would lead to greater diligence in pressing necessary advice, as to the sanitation of their homes, on the families of the poor, and greater willingness on their part to attend to it.

The nurses should work in closer touch with the medical men, and as much as possible under their orders.

The duty of granting relief, medical comforts, nourishment, etc., should be, so far as possible, separated from the nurse's duties, and left to other agencies, such as the parish authorities, the clergy, district visitors, or charitable missions.

District nurses in large towns should be established in District Homes, under highly-trained Superintendents. In these Homes, probationers, already hospital-trained,

should have special training, from three months upwards, in district work. "Nurses who have passed satisfactorily through this training should be entered on the register of the Association—a privilege which it would be dangerous to extend to any whose qualifications have not been so tested."

District nurses should possess some knowledge of the treatment of women after their confinements, and of their infants, which should be imparted to them, if this were possible, during their course of training.

Those who are interested in nursing will notice that the principles here outlined, which in some particulars mark an advance on what had been done in Liverpool, contain the germ of almost all that has been accomplished in district nursing up to the present day.

The National Association adopted the principles of the Report, and in thanking the sub-committee for their labours, added a warm acknowledgment of the liberality of the chairman in defraying the cost of collecting the information and publishing the Report. Mr. Rathbone, after protesting in vain against this tribute, took an early opportunity of issuing a second edition of the Report, from which he omitted it.

When the Liverpool system and the Metropolitan and National Association, as it was renamed in 1876, were both fairly afloat, William Rathbone had for some ten years little to do with nursing, except as taking his full share in the work of their respective Committees. In 1887, the year of Queen Victoria's Jubilee, an immense impetus was given to the work which lay so near to his heart,

by the Queen's decision to devote to district nursing the surplus of the Women's Offering, a sum of about £70,000. She appointed as Trustees of the fund the Duke of Westminster, Sir James Paget, and Sir Rutherford Alcock. The Trustees were engaged for some six months on preliminary inquiries and plans, working as an informal committee, and in consultation with William Rathbone, who acted as a sort of unofficial secretary. He used to describe this committee, half-humorously, as "the most efficient he had ever known, as it hardly ever met." Its proceedings mainly consisted of suggestions, memoranda, or questions, issued by the secretary in triplicate to his three colleagues, who promptly returned them with their assent or comments. As all four were men of great knowledge of the subject and capacity for business, no time and no words were wasted.

In June 1878 the Trustees transferred the executive part of their duties to a Provisional Committee. The Duke of Westminster was chairman, and William Rathbone undertook the duties of honorary secretary.[1]

In the course of eighteen meetings, extending over more than a year, this committee organised

[1] In addition to the three Trustees, the Provisional Committee included the following members:—Lady Rosebery, Lord Lyttelton, Mr. Henry Bonham-Carter, Mrs. Henry Grenfell, Mrs. Theodore Acland, Mr. and Mrs. Dacre Craven, and Mr. W. S. Caine.

the work of Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses on its present footing. By its original charter, granted in September 1889, the Institute was connected with St. Katharine's Royal Hospital. This ancient foundation was instituted and endowed by Queen Matilda, wife of Stephen, in the twelfth century, and from that time to the present the Queens of England have been its Patrons. Queen Victoria appointed the Master of St. Katharine's for the time being to be President of the Jubilee Institute, and placed at the disposal of the Council offices, and a house for the Superintendent and her assistants, at St. Katharine's Hospital in Regent's Park.[1] It was the good-fortune of the Institute to secure in its first President, the Rev. Arthur Peile, Master of St. Katharine's, a very able head, who has, for fifteen years, devoted himself with unsparing energy to perfecting and working the new organisation.

The Provisional Committee met for the last time in November 1889, on which occasion "they placed on record their deep indebtedness to Mr. Rathbone for his unceasing and most valuable labours in the onerous duties of Honorary Secretary. They all felt that the success of the

[1] The connection between the Jubilee Institute and St. Katharine's Hospital was terminated by the Supplemental Charter granted by His Majesty in 1904.

work was due to him and his long and wide experience in similar work."

The first meeting of the Council resolved to submit his name to the Queen for the office of Vice-President. He was duly appointed by Her Majesty and, owing to the kind insistence of his colleagues—for he made many attempts in later years to resign—he retained that office until his death.[1]

This brief statement gives little idea of the immense amount of work for which it stands. The organisation of a comparatively new branch

[1] There is some misconception as to the precise functions of Queen Victoria's Institute. It does not itself nurse the poor. Its objects may be shortly defined as follows :—

To assist in organising, on right lines, local Associations in affiliation to the Institute, who will employ district nurses, whether singly or gathered in groups in a Home and under a Superintendent.

To give district-training to nurses, already hospital-trained, to fit them for the service of the poor in their own homes.

To supply such nurses to affiliated Associations by whom they are paid; and also to prepare and recommend for affiliated Homes, Superintendents whose appointment must be approved by the Institute.

To maintain the standard of the nurses by periodical inspection, especially of those working singly, who are visited by an Inspector of the Institute at least twice yearly.

Generally to advise and assist those starting or carrying on district nursing, and to watch and safeguard the interests of district nurses.

The scope of the work may be roughly indicated by the following figures. At this time (January 1905), about 1240 Queen's Nurses are being employed by 659 affiliated Associations at a cost of about £115,000 a year. The expenditure of the Institute, the cost of the training and supervision of these nurses, and of its other incidental work, is about £11,000 a year. It may therefore be said to stimulate and to regulate an expenditure by the localities nursed, on district nursing, rather more than ten times as great as its own.

of work over the whole of the three kingdoms involved innumerable decisions upon large questions of policy and small questions of detail, and upon both William Rathbone, with his friend, Mr. Henry Bonham-Carter, was one of the principal referees. Both were in close touch with Miss Florence Nightingale, whose authority on nursing matters of course stood above that of anybody else, and who, hidden in her invalid's room, served as a kind of final Court of Appeal. William Rathbone's experience was by this time equalled in length and variety by few others, either men or women, in the nursing world. But besides this, he had qualities which do not invariably accompany age and experience, but which fitted him admirably to be the motive-power of a new undertaking — an unbounded faith in the work it had to do, courage in facing risks, and energy to grapple with difficulties. His readiness on all occasions to go ahead as rapidly as possible, and to aim as high, became so well-known to his colleagues that some of the more cautious among them fell into a way of always snipping a piece off everything that "Mr. Rathbone" proposed, and he in his turn, finding this out, used occasionally to propose more than he expected or wished to carry. Except, however, when acting on this principle, his wonderfully sure instinct for the practicable saved him from often doing or proposing anything really rash. As a

rule he knew, like a skilful engineer, just how much he could get out of his machinery without overstraining it. Thus in deciding the standard of nursing to be set by the Institute for its own nurses and for affiliated institutions, he was very anxious that while the demand was set high enough to arouse enthusiasm and to secure that work associated with the Queen's name should be as perfect as possible, there should yet be elasticity enough to meet the differing circumstances and degrees of experience of different parts of the country. When any institution that seemed to have the germs of vigorous life was yet not quite on the lines nor up to the standard that he and his colleagues judged the best, his inclination was always to grant it admission, and trust to persuasion and the example of others to bring it up to the mark.

The first article of his own creed was inspection: constant inspection of the work of every small group of nurses by the matron of their Home; and periodic inspection by a travelling inspector of the highest possible competency. That nurses should receive the amount and kind of training that would give them—not the most perfect drilling in hospital routine, but the greatest fitness for their work in the homes of the poor, not forgetting that they had frequently to act upon their own responsibility in the necessary absence

of the doctor; that they should not act as relieving officers nor, at least in any sectarian spirit, as Bible-women; that they should be the obedient hand-maids of the doctors; that wherever possible they should live in Homes, so that they might have not only some of the cheerfulness of domestic life, but also the stimulus of exchanging experiences; that above all they should be taught that their business was to do whatever would relieve the sufferings of their patients and help to cure them, and should never be allowed to refuse any service necessary to this end, however menial, on the ground that it was not "part of a nurse's work,"—these were some of the principles on which he constantly insisted.

With those upon whom the success of the movement perhaps most of all depended—the superintendents, the matrons, the inspectors—his influence and, perhaps one may even say, his popularity were great. He was brought into close contact with a large number of these ladies, not only through his personal connection with the Institute and various hospitals and nursing institutions of all kinds, but because he made a practice of having always in training, at St. Thomas's Hospital and at Brownlow Hill Infirmary, two or three probationers of his own, destined, if they turned out well, for important posts of superintendence. They found in him a detailed, almost

expert knowledge of their profession, combined with a wide and lofty conception of its scope and aims. Although he had a sympathetic appreciation of their professional point of view, he never let them forget that their work was a vocation as well as a profession, and that they must be prepared, if necessary, to sacrifice their personal ambition to their usefulness. "If you agree to what I ask," he said once to a nurse whom he was urging to undertake a responsible and very difficult position, "by the end of a year or two you will probably have injured your professional reputation and quarrelled with most of your professional friends. But that won't matter. The work will be done." There was something exhilarating and invigorating in this high standard of expectation, especially perhaps, from its unwontedness, to women. The demands he made upon his subordinates or his fellow-workers were honoured the more readily because it was obvious to all that the level of devotion to duty on which he expected to find them was the level upon which he himself habitually lived and moved.

CHAPTER VI

POLITICS AND PARLIAMENT—1862 TO 1869

In the spring of 1862 William Rathbone married again. His wife was an Irishwoman, a daughter of Mr. Acheson Lyle of Londonderry, and a second cousin of his own, through kinship with his mother's family, the Gregs.[1] They continued for some time to live at New Brighton, in the same house on the cliff, overlooking the Mersey.

The year of his second marriage was the year of the Lancashire Cotton Famine. Civil war was going on in America; the Federal Government had proclaimed a blockade of the Southern ports; ships laden with cotton could not get through, and the manufacturers, cut off from their principal supplies of raw material, began to run their mills short time or to close them altogether. The distress in the manufacturing parts of the country

[1] "For the last thirty-two years," says the private Memoir before quoted, written in 1894, "*we* should be substituted for *I* in speaking of any action or work of my life"; and those who knew them best know how almost literally true this is.

was very great. In Liverpool, on the other hand, merchants and others engaged in the cotton trade were realising large profits from the rise in the price of cotton. A relief fund had been started for the benefit of the sufferers, and a meeting was about to be held to raise a fund in Liverpool, when Mr. Charles Melly called upon William Rathbone and told him his fears that public opinion in the town was not sufficiently awake to the gravity of the distress, or to the very special claims which the operatives, whom the scarcity of cotton was reducing to starvation, had upon the merchants whom it had enriched. They consulted the Mayor, who surmised that fifteen or twenty thousand pounds might be raised in Liverpool. This seemed to the two friends entirely inadequate. They made a tour of the leading merchants, explained their view as to the duty of Liverpool, which met with very general agreement, and got some of them to put down their names for very large sums. This started the fund on the right level ; more than the sum named by the Mayor was subscribed at the first meeting, and the total contribution from the town amounted to over £100,000.

When a Central Executive Committee was formed in Manchester, to control all the various relief funds, William Rathbone was put on it as a representative of Liverpool. The Committee

consisted of twenty-four persons. Lord Derby was Chairman, Sir James Kay Shuttleworth, Deputy Chairman, Mr. Maclure (afterwards Sir J. W. Maclure, Bart.), Honorary Secretary, and the other members were carefully chosen so as to be representative of all parties and creeds and of the three property-owning classes, the landowners, the manufacturers, and the merchants. Several of them were men of great administrative ability, with whom it was instructive and stimulating to work. This Central Committee had more than a hundred local committees working under their direction. Beside raising funds, it was their business to decide the general principles upon which the money should be expended. It was impossible to estimate how long the war would last, and both for this reason, and to prevent demoralisation, relief had to be confined to the supply of bare necessities. After some little experience, they concluded that a sum graduated for men, women, and children, but averaging two shillings per head per week, would be just enough to maintain life and health, nothing being allowed for rent. There was some doubt whether this would be sufficient, and week by week the members of the Executive anxiously scanned the returns of sickness and mortality, which, however, to the general satisfaction, showed no perceptible increase on the normal rates. Privation might be telling

hardly on the old and weak, but among the able-bodied it was clear that enforced sobriety and release from the confinement of the factory more than counterbalanced its ill effects.

The spirit shown by the Lancashire operatives won the respect of all who were brought into contact with them. It had been very generally expected that they would raise a clamour in favour of intervention of some kind by the British Government to put an end to the blockade. The Confederate Government itself counted upon this. But the influence of Cobden and Bright was very strong among them. As a matter of profit and loss, they seem to have appreciated the futility of ridding themselves of a costly blockade, by bringing upon the country a ten times more costly war, and in the point of principle they sided entirely with the North. In the eyes of Mr. Gladstone it might be true that "no distinction could be broader than the distinction between the question whether the Southern ideas of slavery are right, and the question whether they could be justifiably put down by war from the North,"[1] but this broad distinction was too subtle for the cotton operatives. To them the cause of the North meant simply the cause of emancipation and human freedom. As a direct consequence of the blockade, they saw their means of livelihood for the time gone; their savings were

[1] *Life of Gladstone*, vol. ii. p. 71.

exhausted to the last farthing; they were reduced to dependence on the poor-rate or on relief funds; the women—the most independent and prosperous section of working women in England—sang or begged in the streets. They bore their sufferings as if they were the result of "an act of God," an earthquake or a hurricane; showed no bitterness against either side in America, and stood out more firmly than any class in England against the movement in favour of breaking the blockade and recognising the Southern Confederacy.

William Rathbone greatly admired their fortitude. He appreciated it the more that his attitude towards the war was not unlike their own. He had friends in both North and South, and sympathised with both. He was utterly against intervention by England in any shape on either side, but unlike many who thus far went with him, he believed in the future of the Union. Like almost every one in England, including Richard Cobden, he seems, at least in the early stages of the war, to have thought it probable that some of the Southern States would in the end have to be allowed to go, but that there would be any general break-up he would not believe. For the past twenty years he had watched regretfully, from his standpoint as a merchant in the American trade, the gradually increasing corruption of American political life, which he attributed largely to the means taken by

slave-holders and protectionists respectively to preserve their favourite institutions, slavery and a tariff. But he insisted that the heart of the nation was sound, and that when the disasters of the war had taught them the necessity of purging the administration and the army of corruption, they would emerge into a purer and healthier national life. He had many an argument on the subject with his Conservative and land-owning colleagues on the Executive of the Famine Fund. Their sympathies, like those of the great majority of their class, were of course with the South, and in the darkest days of Northern fortunes, when the Federal army was in retreat after Bull's Run, he found the good-naturedly contemptuous tone of their "I told you so," rather hard to bear.

In his own town, among men of his own class and political party, his opinions were still those of a very small minority. His friend, Mr. J. M. Forbes, of Boston, came to England in the spring of 1863 on a private mission from the Federal Government. This mission required intercourse with merchants and shipowners, as well as politicians and diplomatists. "Among the merchants," he wrote afterwards, "I only remember as unconditional friends, Tom Baring and William Rathbone, junior [the subject of this memoir], William Evans, and Tom Potter." He found the climate in London socially very chilly. "Our best friends,

with a very small circle excepted, were with us only in feeling, and lamented that we should approve of continuing the bloody contest, instead of letting the 'erring sisters go in peace,' as many on both sides at first wished. Bright, Cobden, W. E. Forster, the Duke of Argyle, and a few others were with us heartily, and took bold ground in our cause ; but, generally speaking, the aristocracy and the trading classes were solid against us."[1] The question, like every question both new and great, cut clean through the lines of political party. If the champions mentioned above were of the Liberal party, so also, unfortunately, were the authors of the sayings which rankled worst and longest in Northern breasts. It was Lord Palmerston, the Prime Minister of the Liberal Administration, who in a public speech jested at the "unfortunately rapid movements" of the soldiers at Bull's Run. It was Lord Russell, the Foreign Minister, who talked sneeringly of the "once United States," and described the struggle as one in which the North was striving for empire and the South for independence. Worst of all, it was Mr. Gladstone, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the statesman whose influence with the English people was then most evidently on the flow, who spoke of disruption as the cup which all the rest of the world saw that the North must drink, and with most infelicitous

[1] *Life of J. M. Forbes*, by Mrs. Forbes Hughes. Houghton, Mifflin, and Co.

felicity said of Jefferson Davis and the other Southern leaders that they had made an army, were making a navy, and what was more than either, had made a nation. The fact was, that in English political circles the constitutional issue had almost blotted out the question of slavery; but the Northerners, knowing that they were fighting the battle of emancipation and of democracy, naturally expected sympathy and moral support, at least from the Liberal party in England, and these sallies, coming from its official chiefs, had to them all the sting of treachery.

The Federal Government had a more substantial cause of resentment against England than imprudent rhetoric and ill-natured jests. The dispute as to the right of a neutral to supply ships to a belligerent for purposes of war seemed at one time on the point of ending in a war between the two countries. The main facts may be very briefly summarised. The *Alabama*, a small steamer of rather more than a thousand tons register, was built at Birkenhead in the ship-yard of Messrs. Laird. It was pretty generally known that she was intended for use as a privateer in the service of the Confederates, and some time before she was ready for sea, Mr. Adams, the American Minister in London, lodged information of her nature and destination with the British Government, and asked for her detention pending inquiry. Lord Russell had some doubts whether

he would be legally justified in complying. Some delay occurred in consulting the Law Officers of the Crown, and on the very day on which it was decided to issue the order for her detention, news came that the *Alabama* had escaped. Her career as a privateer lasted for two years, and was so successful that she almost banished the United States mercantile marine from the seas. She was not merely an English-built ship. Her crew, gunners, and guns were chiefly English. She habitually lured her prey within her reach by flying the English flag, and she frequently put into English ports. Very bitter feeling was excited in the States against England, and their Government maintained that the British Government was liable for the damage done by the ship—a view which received final confirmation, after ten long years of diplomatic dispute, by the unanimous verdict of the Geneva arbitration.

To William Rathbone, as a Liverpool ship-owner, the question was naturally one of deep interest, and he was not long content to be entirely passive in the face of it. Great Britain, he reasoned, has the largest mercantile marine in the world, and is more dependent than any other country upon supplies coming from without. The precedent set by the case of the *Alabama*, if turned against England in future wars, would be more damaging to her than it could be to any other

Power—far more so than to one so self-sufficient and so seldom at war as the United States. England, again, in time of war could build ships for herself better than any one else. She had control of seaports in every part of the world. These advantages would be neutralised if the law of nations permitted a foreign Power at war with her to use the ship-yards and recruiting grounds of the world to replenish its navy, and the ports of all Northern Europe as a basis whence to prey upon her commerce. Of the commercial and maritime interests thus menaced, Liverpool was the centre and natural champion, and many of her most intelligent men of business shared these views. With the rest, dislike of the Yankees and neighbourly feeling for the Lairds, the highly respected firm who had built the *Alabama*, combined to obscure the real questions at issue.

In the spring of 1863 it was well known that the same firm had nearly completed the building of two formidable iron rams, and no one seriously doubted, although legal proof was difficult to produce, that these had been ordered by the Confederate Government, and were intended to be used in breaking through the blockade. The mission already alluded to, which brought Mr. J. M. Forbes and Mr. Aspinwall to England, was to prevent the sailing of these rams, and if necessary to buy up these and any other vessels which they

knew or suspected to be destined for war against the North. On landing in Liverpool, Mr. Forbes's first visit, after that to the American Consul, was to William Rathbone, whom he found "full of the soundest views as to the interest and duty of the British Government to prevent the outfitting of cruisers against us." In a letter written some months later, Mr. Forbes alluded to this interview in a passage which expresses well the crucial point of the difficulty, and shows also how clearly it had been apprehended by our Liverpool correspondent:

As you told me the day I landed in Liverpool, your law is, under your practice, radically defective. Ours did well under our practice, but you can never for a moment count upon our continuing the same practice in the face of your precedents. You hit the nail on the head when you told me that your law was worthless for our protection. Accept my assurance that ours will be worthless for your protection in the next war. Our mutual safety is to change it, and that promptly, while you are strong and can do it with a good grace, and while we are still in danger from its defects. It is absurd to say that your navy would have been much more efficient than ours in catching the *Alabama*, etc. All naval ships are loaded down with guns and stores and trash. Our mercantile warships are better for speed than either your or our warships.

Earlier in the same letter he says:

The more I think and know of the whole subject,

however, the more sure I am that the only safeguard against the war, if not now, certainly the first time you get into a war while we are at peace, is your prescription —a radical change of your and our law.

The defects in the English law were in fact the rock on which Anglo-American peace very nearly split. During the controversy over the rams, which dragged along for a full year after that interview, Lord Russell took his stand obstinately upon the question of legality. There was a doubt whether the law as it stood justified him in detaining the rams, and the Government at first tacitly, afterwards explicitly, adhered to the doctrine that England was not obliged to alter her laws to please a foreign State. The object therefore of the Englishmen who, like William Rathbone, realised the seriousness of the situation, was to create a public opinion that should force the Government to change the law, not to please a foreign State, but to allay the fears and satisfy the conscience of classes in their own community who understood the conditions of the mercantile marine better than Lord Russell, and were determined that, under the guise of law, an injustice should not be done to their neighbours. William Rathbone first tried to put the commercial point of view personally before the leading men in Parliament. He wrote to his wife from London on April 23 :

After a very heavy day, I feel satisfied on the whole. I think I was right to come. After an interview with Layard I wrote to Lord Russell, and in the evening discussed matters with several members, including Forster and Cobden; and at their urgent recommendation, and with Layard's approval, had a long discussion with Lord Palmerston. He was very attentive and cordial, and took the points in a way that showed he understood them. Whether I made any impression it is difficult to say, but I don't feel as if I had done harm, and may have done some good. At any rate, I feel as if I had done my best; I also feel that Lord Russell and Layard and many others are honestly in earnest and fully aware of the dangers before them, and that they will do their best to avert them. To-morrow I want to go to the Americans and try to get them to enforce on their men the importance of care and discretion to *enable* our Ministers to keep the peace; and then into the city. . . .

The principal impression left on William Rathbone's mind by this interview with Lord Palmerston seems to have been surprise at that statesman's ignorance of mercantile affairs. He appeared to be of opinion that the Americans could easily, if they had pleased, have taken the *Alabama*. He was reminded that the American naval forces were being strained to maintain the blockade, and that they could not afford to detach sentinel ships for the purpose. Moreover, to find and catch a fast steamer like the *Alabama*, under such a captain as Captain Semmes, was no easy task. To illustrate

the difficulty of finding a ship at sea, William Rathbone gave him the following instance :—A steamer on reaching Port Patrick gave notice that she had passed a derelict ship laden with timber a few hours before. Eight tugs were immediately sent in search, but although they had only the effect of wind and waves to reckon with, they had failed entirely to find her. Lord Palmerston objected that the *Alabama* was obliged often to put into port, and that then at least she could be easily caught. He did not seem to be aware that from recent improvements in the economy of fuel, it was possible for a steamer to remain almost an indefinite time at sea, banking up her fires until a ship came in sight, and he showed much surprise on being told that a steamer could be built to steam out to Bombay and back without touching port, if she took coal as her cargo. It was pointed out to him that as under the Treaty of Paris, the flag covered the merchandise, anything which raised even slightly the rates of insurance on cargo carried in the ships of belligerents would cause such cargo to be transferred to ships under a neutral flag. This might mean that if England were at war, she would lose her carrying trade, which was of greater importance to her than perhaps to all the other nations put together.

William Rathbone came back to Liverpool, and, in association with Mr. George Melly,

Mr. W. J. Lamport, and others of his friends, busied himself with some success in rousing up commercial opinion, and in getting it embodied in the resolutions which were sent up to Government by the Shipowners' Association, the Council of the Chamber of Commerce, and other public bodies. "I have been very busy about belligerent rights, and am so still," he wrote to his wife in May. "I think Liverpool is disgracing itself most abominably in the person of some of its most prominent men, and one does not see how to help it." Again: "The fear of war with America arising out of any fault of ours haunts me like a nightmare; and will, until I have tried everything to open people's eyes. Lamport is helping me. I hope another week will see all done that can be." A few days later he adds: "I am still very anxious about American affairs, though my hopes are greater than my fears. The shipowners meet to-morrow, and I hope we shall carry a good resolution. Lidderdale,[1] who is no partisan, writes confirming the view that the Americans will not stand their commerce being destroyed by vessels fitted out from here." While Mr. Forbes was in London, William Rathbone wrote to him: "It would be a great point gained if, either by a letter

[1] The late Right Hon. Wm. Lidderdale, afterwards Governor of the Bank of England; at that time representative in New York of Rathbone Brothers and Co.

in reply to some question, or any other way, Mr. Adams[1] could state publicly and authoritatively that the American Government were quite ready to join the English Government in such alterations of the laws of the respective countries as might make them more efficient to prevent neutral countries from being made a basis for war against the commerce of a belligerent. You are losing a great deal by the absence of this public declaration. I hear it constantly urged, sometimes by members of Parliament, that America has declined or is unwilling to make alterations similar to those we might make."

On the 5th of September, Mr. Adams wrote to inform Lord Russell that one of the ironclad rams was about to sail for the United States, and added the historic comment: "It would be superfluous for me to point out to your Lordship that *this is War*." On the 8th September he was informed that the departure of the rams had been stopped. Some days later he heard that their detention was only provisional, and was still under consideration by the Government. This was the unpropitious moment chosen by Mr. Sumner, the Chairman of the United States Committee on Foreign Affairs, to make a violent and belligerent speech to a young men's Debating Society, attacking England for her attitude during the war. William Rath-

[1] The American Minister in London.

bone wrote to Mr. Forbes to protest. In the course of a long reply Mr. Forbes said :

BOSTON, *October* 31, 1863.

Your note about Sumner's speech was duly received, and has been used so that it will do good. Being marked private, I could not show it to Sumner, but I read it to him without giving your name. I have also sent a copy of its substance to one of our campaign orators who was disposed to pitch into your Government and people too ! Sumner was much disturbed at it, and at other similar letters ; but insists that he was right in telling the truth, and that he thus best served the interests of peace. He does not shine in the perceptive faculties : has eloquence, scholarship, high principles, and many other good qualities, but he has not the faculty of putting himself in the position of an opposing party, and conceiving of how things look from a different standpoint to his own.

Nobody can appreciate the extreme sensitiveness of the English mind to anything which can, however remotely, be construed into a threat, unless he has been in the little island within the past year. When to this honest sensitiveness you add the many causes for taking offence in the selfishness of certain parties to the prejudice of others who wish to see our experiment fail, there is an array of dangers against speaking out which will deter most men from doing so. Sumner claims to be, *par excellence*, the friend of peace and of England, and therefore thinks he can best sound the alarm when he sees war threatening.

He says that all the arguments that you and I use against plain speaking were used with even more force against speaking the truth against slavery. It would irritate the South, would hurt our friends, would strengthen

the hands of our enemies, etc. etc., and if he had listened then we should now be the supporters of a mighty slave empire. There is something in this, but analogies are not conclusive, and I shall continue to do my best to keep people's tongues quiet![1]

The fate of the rams hung in suspense for another six months, the Government still declining to commit themselves to more than their temporary detention. Those who saw the seriousness of the issue continued their efforts to awake public opinion and to keep it awake. The latter, as is always apt to be the case, was the more difficult part of their task, for few ventured openly to urge that the vessels should be allowed to sail. On the 28th May 1864, William Rathbone was at length able to write to Mr. Forbes: "You will be glad to hear that Laird's rams are at last disposed of to the British Government; and it is the opinion of the Government that they have put a stop to fitting out ships."

Since his breakdown in health in 1857-58, William Rathbone had not taken any active share in local party politics. The organisation of district and workhouse nursing, the work of the Cotton Famine Relief Fund, and his activities in the matter of the rams, had more than filled all the time he could spare from the business of his firm. It was therefore after some hesitation that in the summer of 1865 he undertook to join Mr. T. D. Hornby

[1] *Life of J. M. Forbes*, ii. 59.

in the management of Mr. Gladstone's candidature for the constituency of South Lancashire, and was soon made chairman of his election Committee. The circumstances under which the contest was fought made it a difficult one to organise. Mr. Gladstone had for many years represented the University of Oxford, and he intended to keep his old seat if re-elected. But his tenure, always hotly contested, was known this year to be more than ever uncertain. South Lancashire was his native county, and it had long been the ambition of the Liberal party of the division to secure him as one of its three representatives. They accordingly decided to reserve a nomination for him on the chance of his being defeated at Oxford, and in the meantime to press forward the canvass with their two other candidates, Mr. Henry Yates Thompson and Mr. J. P. Heywood. The calculations of the Liberal workers seemed to promise a safe victory, but the party had been demoralised by two previous defeats, and the general belief that Mr. Gladstone's candidature was not serious, had a damping effect on its enthusiasm. The Conservatives, on the other hand, were stirred to do their best by the hope of inflicting a second defeat upon their greatest opponent. The party Whips were not willing to let Mr. Gladstone appear in person to fight the seat, unless victory could be fairly assured, and William Rathbone went down to Hawarden to explain the local situation.

He told Mr. Gladstone that while he and his friends believed the seat would be won, they could not absolutely promise a victory. The issue would turn, they thought, on the votes of some thousand hesitating Whigs, who up till then had always voted straight, but whose latent dread of democracy had been quickened by the American Civil War. If Mr. Gladstone succeeded in soothing their fears, his return, they believed, would be secured. Mr. Gladstone decided to take the risk. Immediately the defeat at Oxford was announced, he came down to Lancashire and spent the two days that remained before the poll in a campaign as brilliant as it was brief. When the votes were counted, two Conservative names headed the poll, but Mr. Gladstone came next, and so secured the third seat.

During the next few years he seems to have kept up an occasional correspondence with the chairman of his election Committee, on matters in which the latter could give him information as to the political feeling or local interests of his constituents. Five or six of these letters, very characteristic of both correspondents, are on the subject of the abortive Reform Bill of 1866. After replying to some questions of Mr. Gladstone's relating to the figures at the election, his Liverpool correspondent, writing in January, diffidently expressed a hope that the expected measure was not going to be, as was rumoured, "a mere lowering of the franchise with-

out putting it on any broad and intelligible principle, with no redistribution of seats and no disfranchisement of corrupt places and people. If so," he added, "in trying to avoid opposition, it may be a Bill no one cares for, and may bring about defeat and distrust." Unfortunately the words were a faithful description of the scope of the Bill which Mr. Gladstone had all ready to introduce a few weeks later, and, as the event proved, they were also an accurate forecast of its fate. It was a mere measure for lowering the franchise: from ten pounds to seven in boroughs, and from fifty to fourteen in counties. It failed because it roused no enthusiasm in the country, and in its failure it brought down the Government. Mr. Gladstone's indefatigable and tenacious mind seldom let a criticism slip past unopposed even when it came from a single obscure individual, and in this case he knew his critic to be representative of and influential among his constituents. His answer came by return of post:

Now a word as to your P.S.—It touches four questions with respect to a Reform Bill, of which I need only trouble you, however, on two:

1. Do you advisedly think that the disfranchisement of corrupt places and people ought to form part of any plan of Reform now to be introduced? To me it would seem a receipt for destroying any hope of either.

2. Redistribution of seats is a different matter. But

what do you say to this point? We have an Opposition of say 290. Suppose Mr. Lowe and Mr. Horsman with their tail to be only ten. That gives 300. Then suppose we have only a Schedule B, taking one member from each of the thirty boroughs. How do you suppose the votes of the sixty representatives of those boroughs will go? What margin will remain for carrying a Bill? *Why* is a good enfranchisement to be condemned unless with a good redistribution?

To this William Rathbone replied:

Many thanks for your note and cordial expressions respecting the party in South Lancashire.

I have some hesitation in venturing on any reply to your questions. I feel that (like most men) I am liable to be biassed in my judgment of public opinion by the views of those with whom I most act and come in contact.

Among those of whose opinions I can judge, the Bill talked of would not be considered a good enfranchisement, and while it would alarm some, would excite little enthusiasm with any. Many think that it would increase corruption, none that it would settle anything.

I hear many advocate, as much safer, giving the franchise on some broad principle, say of rating and direct taxation, to all who by paying these for a certain time have afforded a fair presumption that they are good citizens; and it is thought that statesmen could surely guard this from any risk of its swamping the legitimate influence of middle and upper classes by some adaptation of some of the many means which have been suggested by those wishing for a broad basis for representation, but not for a government by mere numbers.

How far any plan hitherto suggested would take generally I cannot say, but Englishmen generally in the end come right, when sound and just views are placed before them.

There is now felt great and general disgust at the corruption of the last election; great desire to have the question of Reform settled safely and for some time, and great unanimity as to the object to be aimed at, viz., safe admission of the working classes to an honest representation. But people look to their statesmen to say how this is to be accomplished, and I would submit whether it may not be safer to risk defeat with a broad and complete measure which would gain support by consideration, than to risk failure in carrying a Bill which neither constituencies nor House thoroughly approve.

Mr. Gladstone's reply again dwelt on the question whether it was essential to a good Bill that enfranchisement and redistribution should go together. This hardly met his correspondent's point, which was that the Bill as proposed pleased nobody—neither the under-represented inhabitants of large towns, nor the lovers of electoral purity, nor the persons of logical minds who wanted a franchise based on intelligible general principles, nor those who were tired of agitation and wanted finality of some sort. Several other letters passed, neither disputant convincing the other. The events of the session showed that the Liverpool merchant's forecast of the course of average public opinion had been sound, as indeed it often was,

and on the 8th June the Bill passed into the limbo of abortive creations which, as its author reminded the House in his opening speech introducing it, is peopled with the skeletons of Reform Bills.

Towards the close of 1867 the health of William Rathbone's father began seriously to fail, and he became anxious that his eldest son should live nearer to him. So the house at New Brighton was given up, and the Rathbones moved into one adjoining the family home at Greenbank. The next year opened sadly for them. In January they lost a child, a little boy of two years old. On February 1, William Rathbone's father died. Later in the same month came the death of Miss Agnes Jones, upon whose life so much of William Rathbone's hopes for the success of his experiment in Workhouse Nursing seemed to depend. Very soon after his father's death, his mother begged that he and his family would come to live with her at Greenbank. He gladly consented, and Greenbank became his home for the rest of his life. His mother, who survived his father till 1882, took the liveliest interest in her son's social and political work. The domestic arrangements made necessary by his life in Parliament would have been found somewhat upsetting by most old ladies of eighty, but she accepted them with unperturbed cheerfulness. For six months of the year she and her servants had the house to

themselves. During the other six, her son's large family of children filled every spare corner of it, and she cheerfully gave up the reins to her daughter-in-law. Some years before her death at the age of ninety-two she had a paralytic seizure, which was followed by gradual and at last complete failure of mental and bodily powers. She possessed one of those constitutions of almost terrible tenacity, which seem as if they can only be torn piecemeal from their grasp on life.

In the spring of 1868 Mr. T. D. Hornby again approached William Rathbone as a deputy from the local Liberals, this time to ask whether he would agree to stand as one of the two Liberal candidates for Liverpool. He had often discussed with his brother, S. G. Rathbone, the possibility of one or other of them at some time entering Parliament, and of the two, he seemed at the time the better able to be spared from the business of their firm. But the growing interest of his work on the Select Vestry and for the various branches of nursing had led him to lay the idea aside. In addition to this reason for hesitation, he had serious doubts as to whether he was the right candidate for the seat under the special circumstances of the case. Liverpool was one of the four great provincial towns to which the Reform Act of 1867 had given a third representative, with the provision that each elector should only vote for two. The object of

this was to ensure that the party in the minority, if their adherents numbered not less than a third of the electorate, should be able to return one of the three representatives. William Rathbone had always been a strong believer in the principle of minority representation, upon the ground that it gave an opportunity of securing the services of some eminent men who might be unfitted or unwilling to undergo the turmoil of a contested election with the possibility of defeat at the end of it. He had now one such name in his mind, that of a rising politician in whose future he had great confidence, and he told Mr. Hornby that if the Liberal party would adopt the candidate he named, he would contribute towards his election expenses, if necessary, as much as double the sum that he would be expected to contribute towards his own if he consented to stand. Mr. Hornby strongly advised him not formally to make any such offer, saying that though he knew him to be sincere, no one else would believe it, and it would be thought to be simply a case of *nolo episcopari*. He offered to make private inquiries, and to let him know if such an arrangement were possible. He soon came back and reported that the leaders of the party whom he had sounded would not hear of it. They had already chosen as one of their candidates Mr. Massey,[1] an expert in Indian affairs, but

[1] The Right Hon. W. N. Massey (1809-1881).

without previous connection with Liverpool, and for their second candidate they were determined to have a local man who understood the commercial and other special interests of the town. William Rathbone's friends urged that so far from sacrificing his Liverpool interests, he would be in a better position in Parliament than outside it to work for the improvements in local administration and taxation, in social conditions and in commercial legislation, which he had so much at heart.

In the hope that this might prove true, he accepted the nomination, but he stipulated that before beginning to prepare for his election, he should be allowed time to set everything in train for that of Mr. Gladstone, so as to hand over his work as chairman in good order to his successor. South Lancashire had now been divided into two constituencies, and it was a much-disputed question among the wire-pullers of the party for which of the two Mr. Gladstone ought to stand. As his native town, Liverpool, was in South-West Lancashire, that seemed his natural seat. But feeling against the disestablishment of the Irish Church—the main question before the electorate—was known to be very strong among certain sections there, and the South-Eastern Division was believed to be a much safer seat. William Rathbone threw himself hotly into the discussion, and, as usual,

he was in favour of the bolder course. For Mr. Gladstone to desert what was regarded as the post of danger would, he felt, be argued to show a want of confidence in the verdict of the constituencies on his cause, and would have a depressing effect on the elections all over the country. If he stayed in South-West Lancashire it would be easy to arrange to take the poll so late, that while the party reaped all the benefit of his bold decision and of the enthusiasm which his electoral campaign was sure to evoke, his defeat if it came would come too late to influence the other elections. He was deputed by the party in Liverpool, who were of course all anxious to keep Mr. Gladstone, to go up to London to lay their case before Mr. Brand, who was then, in the temporary absence of Mr. Glyn, fulfilling the duties of the senior Liberal Whip. Mr. Brand, afterwards Speaker of the House of Commons, was a man of bold and sound judgment in such matters. He saw the force of the argument at once, and promised that Mr. Gladstone should stand for the South-Western Division of the county.

Having gained his point, and handed over his work as chairman of Mr. Gladstone's Committee to his successor, he was able to go abroad for his summer holiday. Already, on June 26, one great meeting had been held in the Amphitheatre in Liverpool in support of his own candi-

dature and that of Mr. Massey, and they had agreed with their opponents that all further meetings and canvassing should be postponed till the autumn. In October the work of the election began in earnest, both in the county and the borough. Mr. Gladstone's eloquence, with the great and congenial subject of the Irish Church for its theme, was at its best, and his campaign was a sort of triumphal progress, marked by scenes of the wildest enthusiasm. Until the last, victory was generally expected; but the newly found strength of Conservatism in Lancashire (one of the most curious discoveries of the Reform Act) was too much for him, and he was defeated by almost three hundred votes. In the South-Eastern Division, which had been pressed on him as a perfectly safe seat, the repulse of the Liberals was even more decisive, and all the eight seats for the county were filled by Tories. In the country at large the verdict went the other way, the Liberals being largely in the majority. After it was all over, William Rathbone was assured, on what he believed to be good authority, that in no less than eight constituencies the Liberal agents had waited to see if Mr. Gladstone would risk a fight in South-West Lancashire before deciding, to run a candidate. Emboldened by his decision, they all fought, and in most cases carried their man.

The glories of the contest in the surrounding county, with Mr. Gladstone as one of the candidates, of course threw the borough election comparatively into the shade. Still, at the worst, a Liverpool election of those days was a more exciting affair than it has ever been since the Redistribution Act of 1885. Party enthusiasm and party oratory instead of being parcelled out, as now, among nine different divisions, of which no one, when the contest is over, remembers the boundaries or the names, were concentrated upon the one contest for the representation of the city of Liverpool, and the three successful candidates could boast that they represented a larger number of constituents than any other members of the House of Commons. Fortunately in those days the town contained, what it contains no longer, at least one hall capable of holding a really great audience. The building known as Hengler's Circus, on the site now occupied by the Hippodrome, was ugly and inconvenient in many ways, but it could seat several thousand people, and we know from Mr. Morley that Mr. Gladstone "always described it as the place most agreeable to the speaker of all those with which he was acquainted." [1] It was here that the principal meetings of an election were usually held, and either here or at one of the other large halls—the Amphitheatre or the

[1] *Life of Gladstone*, vol. iii. p. 521.

Theatre Royal — it became the custom, during William Rathbone's eleven years' tenure of the seat, to hold a great annual meeting, usually in November, in order that he might render to his constituents what he was fond of calling an account of his stewardship. These meetings were a revival of an old Liberal practice which had fallen somewhat into disuse. In the life of the Liberal party in Liverpool to-day there is nothing which quite corresponds to them, and nothing, perhaps we may add, which fulfils the same function of visibly embodying the idea of representative government by a democracy. The hall, if we may trust the newspaper reports of the times, was, as a rule, crowded from floor to ceiling long before the proceedings began, by an audience composed mainly of working men. These had not been drawn together by the hope of hearing two or three well-known statesmen speak upon some burning question of the hour ; nor were they summoned only on the eve of an election, to begin a cursory acquaintance with a gentleman from the South who intended shortly to solicit their votes. They had come prepared to listen for some two hours to one who, as he frequently said of himself, was no orator, but who was able to set before them without technicalities, in plain English which they could follow, an account of the principal political events of the past year, described of course, on the whole,

from the point of view of his and their political party, but yet, when a Conservative Government was in power, with generous acknowledgments of everything he thought good in the legislation which his opponents had promoted, and always with special reference to the bearing of current events on the interests and problems of Liverpool. Although he claimed great freedom of political action in Parliament, William Rathbone never allowed his constituents to forget that they were responsible for sending him there; and in addressing them at these annual gatherings he took it quietly for granted that they had come not for an evening's amusement, nor even mainly as a demonstration of their political strength, but in order that they might learn the facts and form a sound judgment as to the merits of disputed political questions, and might determine their suffrages at a future election accordingly. The proceedings had thus something of the air of a business meeting of shareholders, called together by their Directors to hear how their interests had been managed during the year. There was, however, nothing of the coldness and formal correctness of the business meeting about them. To judge by the newspaper accounts, which are confirmed in this particular by the reports of some who remember the meetings of those days, the reception which William Rathbone met with at them was as a rule more than cordial, vociferously

enthusiastic. Most of the audiences had known him by name, and probably by sight, for most of his and their lives. With generous facility they transferred to him, who began his parliamentary life a few months after his father's death, some of the affection and confidence which they had felt for the noble-looking, white-haired man who had been a prominent Liberal in Liverpool since Roscoe's election of 1806. He himself was a Liverpool man in almost every sense in which it is possible for a man to belong to a city—born a freeman within the city bounds, educated there, apprenticed there, representing as a merchant and a shipowner her two principal industries. He had, too, a qualification in himself which always seems to make special appeal to the working men of the great Lancashire cities, a qualification which may perhaps be best described as a union of detailed knowledge and shrewd judgment as to the present facts of commercial and national life, with an idealistic faith in their future possibilities. He was thus able in the most literal sense of the word to *represent* Liverpool in the House of Commons.

At the meetings of his first election the interest was not, of course, of the same educational and personal kind as at these later annual account-renderings. They were of the ordinary type of election meetings. The Reform Act of 1866 and

the proposed disestablishment of the Irish Church were the two great questions of the day, and to these topics, upon which he held the views common to his party, much of his speeches was necessarily devoted. But even at these meetings he gave great prominence to the questions about which he knew and cared the most: the incidence of local taxation, the administration of the Poor Law and of other branches of local government, the defects of the bankruptcy laws, and of the laws regulating the transfer of land. He did not hesitate to devote a whole speech at a large meeting to a subject offering as little scope for the lighter graces of electioneering oratory as local rating. These subjects were intensely interesting to him, because his work as a man of business and a citizen had brought home to him how great was their bearing on the prosperity, happiness, and moral good of the people; and he took it for granted, as was his way all through life, that if he could put the facts important to social well-being before his audience so that they realised their importance, they would become as interested as he was himself.

Whether in this case his expectation was justified by the event it is hard to say. His meetings were crowded and enthusiastic, but it was a time of great political excitement, and there were of course other speakers. If his audience listened attentively, they must have received some valuable help in forming

an opinion worth the name upon some of the questions which come most closely within the average man's experience. But from the report of those who heard his speeches, it seems probable that they were less effective in delivery than many delivered at the same time by other speakers which make far duller reading. They are full of matter, better expressed and arranged than in later years he ever gave himself time to make the wording of his speeches, and are seasoned by anecdotes and jests so good that it seems probable they were supplied him by S. G. Rathbone, who, if he did not surpass his elder brother in his enjoyment of jokes, was incomparably better at making them. But he was at this time in the habit of giving to his speeches almost too careful preparation, and of subjecting the matter of them to the criticisms of his brother, or some other of his special friends and advisers, who pruned and pared them down into conformity with the somewhat restrained type of Whiggism then prevalent among the official Liberals of the city. Of course he would not have submitted to their criticisms for a moment if he had not been thoroughly convinced that they were saving him from many blunders of over-hasty judgment and over-strong expression. Perhaps they were; for it was natural to him to think and feel strongly about the subjects for which he cared at all; but the process was scarcely favour-

able to the chances of effective oratory. So far as I have been able to judge, the popular estimate of his speaking at this period was fairly summed up by a hard-headed and blunt-spoken man of business, living in a town at some considerable distance from Liverpool, who, talking of William Rathbone to one of his family soon after his death, said: "I never lost a chance of coming into Liverpool to hear him speak, if I could help it. He was a poor speaker, but he always had something to say that was worth listening to."

Another of his auditors at these early election meetings testifies that on one occasion at least the earnestness and fire of his delivery carried him in a single sentence to a high level of eloquence. It was when he said: "Much as I value the honour of becoming your representative in Parliament, I would rather be left at the bottom of the poll than believe that a single man, the humblest of my fellow-townsmen, should trace his loss of self-respect and the respect of his fellows to corrupt means used to promote my return to Parliament."

Polling day was on November 17. The Liberals all over the country were sweeping steadily to victory, and the hopes of the party in Liverpool ran high. But the town, like the county, remained, as it has done almost without a break ever since, obstinately Conservative. Lord Sandon and Mr. S. R. Graves headed the poll. Mr. Massey was

at the foot. William Rathbone, with nine hundred votes less than Lord Sandon, became the minority member, and thus entered into possession of a perfectly safe seat, which he continued to occupy for eleven years.

CHAPTER VII

THE WORK OF A PRIVATE MEMBER—1869 TO 1880

"Of all secular affairs, politics, rightly considered, are amongst the most unworldly, inasmuch as the man who is devoted to political life ought to be seeking no personal or private good."

DR. DALE OF BIRMINGHAM.

IT must be an easy matter for a biographer to make the parliamentary career of a great party leader interesting, even to readers who care little for the causes and questions at which he chiefly worked. If a measure has been great enough to be made the subject of full-dress debates, to decide the course of elections and the fate of governments, the history of its passage or the failure to pass it into law is sure to have a dramatic interest of its own, however dry and technical its subject may be, and however well known its fate.

The parliamentary work which is to be the subject of this chapter was not of this order, and the task of describing it at length enough to be intelligible without being excessively tedious is a more difficult one. Yet it must be attempted, if

only because the work filled such a large place not merely in William Rathbone's life, but also, if one may use the expression, in his affections. Perhaps, too, the very fact that attention is usually concentrated upon the great contentious questions makes it worth while to recall the kind of opportunities of usefulness which are, or then were, still open to a private member who rarely took part in full-dress debates and was not an aspirant for office.

In the account of his stewardship which he gave to his constituents in the November following his first session—a session of which the Irish Church Bill had almost wholly absorbed the time and public interest—William Rathbone made it a boast that though he had taken part in every division on the Bill, he had never once opened his mouth in the debates upon it except to say Aye or No. The principal claims which he put forward to the continued suffrages of his constituents were that he had procured certain amendments to the Bankruptcy Bill, had persuaded the Minister in charge of the Bill restoring the power of compounding for rates to allow Liverpool a special claim securing to it the benefit of the Act,[1] and had called the attention of the House by a resolution to the unfair incidence of local taxation. This was very characteristic of his theory of his own functions in the House, a theory which he was sometimes obliged

[1] He afterwards saw reason to regret the restoration of this power.

to defend to constituents who would have liked their member to make himself more conspicuous.

I know that many think that the only work of Members of Parliament is to ask questions, make speeches, and take part in divisions. But a far more laborious and very important part of their work consists in carefully collecting information to enable them to legislate wisely and well, and in preparing bills and amendments in such a form that they shall carry out effectively and well the intentions with which they are proposed.[1]

My constituents often ask me to ask questions in the House of Commons, and perhaps I may be found fault with for not doing so. Well, the reason is that I go straight to the responsible Minister or head of a Department. I show him the complaint and ask, "Can you rectify this?" Thus, you see, I go direct to headquarters. I try to get the complaint remedied quietly and with expedition, and not to take up unnecessarily the time of the House and to advertise myself.[2]

From his first entry into the House his instincts as a man of business and as a lover of thorough work were outraged by the ineffective and slovenly character of much of the legislation. Apart from the few great measures which absorbed most of its best statesmanship, Parliament seemed to perform badly its work of making laws, and to perform it under conditions which made efficiency almost impossible. A Bill would be introduced without either the member responsible for it or the lawyer

[1] Speech to his constituents. [2] *Ibid.*

who drafted it having taken the trouble to consider sufficiently how it would affect or be affected by previous Acts. Amendments proposed by members who knew nothing of the subject, and hastily adopted to facilitate its progress, not unfrequently nullified or distorted its whole intention. Its hope of passing depended less on its merits than on mere chance, or on its framer's success in conciliating opposition by concessions which not seldom made it futile for its purpose. Much of the evil arose, he believed, from the custom of referring all Bills to a Committee of the whole House, even when they had already passed through a select committee supposed to consist of those members who knew most about the subject. The attendance during this stage usually consisted of some thirty to fifty of the members specially interested in the matter, but their work was liable to be interrupted by others who, coming casually into the House and thinking they understood the point at issue, proposed amendments which made nonsense of the Bill.[1] A further source of con-

[1] See Mr. Morley's account of the passage of the Home Rule Bill of 1893 :—

"It was Mr. Gladstone's performances in the days of committee on the Bill that stirred the wonder and admiration of the House. . . . When the Bill came on he would put on his glasses, pick up the paper of amendments, and running through them like lightning, would say, 'Of course, that's absurd—that will never do—we can never accept that—is there any harm in this?' Too many concessions made on the spur of the moment to the Unionists stirred resentment in the Nationalists, and once or twice they exploded. These rapid splendours of his had their perils. I pointed out to

fusion lay in the mass of undigested Acts relating to the same subject. As each fresh Act usually only repealed or amended portions of previous Acts, the statute law upon most subjects could only be understood by reading all the Acts in conjunction. Again, the law relating to one subject was frequently amended by Acts relating to other subjects. Thus, to take an instance, of which he once reminded the House, any one desiring to master the law relating to the property of married women could not do so unless he knew that Mr. Russell Gurney's celebrated Act of 1869 had been amended by the Metropolitan Board of Works Act of 1871. All this rendered the law utterly unintelligible except to lawyers, and sometimes unintelligible even to them. Yet it had to be amended by a Parliament of whom the majority had no knowledge of legal matters, to be administered by an untrained magistracy, and to be obeyed by the citizens at large.

him the pretty obvious drawbacks of settling delicate questions as we went along with no chance of sounding the Irishmen, and asked him to spare me a quarter of an hour before luncheon, when the draftsmen and I, having threshed out the amendments of the day, could put the bare points for his consideration. He was horrified at the very thought. 'Out of the question. Do you want to kill me? I must have the whole of the morning for general Government purposes. Don't ask me.' "—*Life of Gladstone*, vol. iii. p. 489.

If this is the way things are done when the repeal of the Union is in question, how much chance is there of thorough discussion of the details of Bankruptcy Bills, Merchant Shipping Bills, and the like? Yet on them great interests, the safety of large classes, may depend.

It is not necessary to explain in much detail the remedies which William Rathbone would have liked to see applied to these defects. He sat on committees on the business (*i.e.* the procedure) of the House of Commons in 1871, and again in 1878, and his views were partly the outcome of the evidence brought before these committees, and partly the outcome of his own observation and experience; substantially, they were in accordance with those of perhaps the greatest authority on parliamentary procedure, Sir Erskine May. In the debates leading to little or no result which periodically took place in the House of Commons upon the question of its procedure, William Rathbone usually took some part, and he from time to time endeavoured to interest his constituents in the question. In 1881, when the difficulties of getting any legislation at all through the teeth of obstruction were beginning to seem insurmountable, he published an article on the reform of parliamentary business in the *Fortnightly Review*. Apart from the importance of the question, his views have a biographic interest from the light they throw on the methods of his own parliamentary activity, and they may be briefly summarised.

In the whole business of legislation there should, he thought, be much freer use of expert legal advice. Much more ample provision should be made for the consolidation of Acts. The staff of

the drafting department of the Government should be greatly strengthened in numbers and in position, and it should be within its province to advise members as to the effect of amendments and to revise Bills after they had been amended. In order to enable Parliament to cope with the steadily increasing mass of its work, the work now badly done by committees on private Bills should be transferred to expert commissioners. Instead of carrying all Bills through committee of the whole House, extensive use should be made of grand committees, and Bills which had been through a grand committee or through a select committee should not, except when the House specially ordered it, pass through a committee of the whole House. Unless these reforms, or something like them, were accomplished, he believed that the House would decline—that it had already begun to decline—in efficiency and in credit. At the very beginning of his parliamentary life he resolved that, pending any great change, he at least as an individual member would do nothing to increase the confusion of the laws.

Wishing during his first session to introduce certain amendments to the Bankruptcy Bill in the direction of greater stringency, he asked the Attorney-General, then Sir Robert Collier, to recommend to him a young barrister of ability with sufficient time on his hands to give him advice.

Sir Robert Collier named Mr. Robert S. Wright[1] as the most brilliant young lawyer that Oxford had turned out for some years.

The Chambers of Commerce in all the principal towns had sent delegates to confer upon the provisions of the Bill. Mr. Wright was able to advise them how the alterations they desired could best be carried into law. The Government could not be persuaded to accept the amendment which William Rathbone, backed by the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, wished to introduce, viz. one which should make the Bill "clearly enunciate the broad, sound English principle that a man who has failed should be bound in law, as he undoubtedly is bound in honour, to pay his debts as soon as he is able to do so." The proposal that the law should give the bankrupt, not final legal discharge, but protection to the extent that is necessary for the maintenance of his family, and to afford him encouragement for future exertion, had to be withdrawn; but a modified amendment was accepted forbidding discharge for debts fraudulently incurred.

About another point in the Bill he wrote:

> At the request of the different Chambers of Commerce, I had remonstrated with Sir Robert Collier on the provision of the Bill which discharged and compensated

[1] Afterwards Sir R. S. Wright, a judge of the High Court of Justice, died 1904.

almost all the then holders of offices under the Bankruptcy Laws. He admitted that the expense was large and most undesirable, but he said that a large part of the failure of the previous Bill had been from the incompetency and gross mismanagement of those appointed, and that it was hopeless to expect a new Bill to work through such hands. I reported his statement, and it was at once assented to by the delegates. While the Bill was going through I obtained curious evidence of the truth of the accusations against Lord L—— and Lord B——, and the awful jobs they had jointly or severally perpetrated in the appointment of the officers in Bankruptcy. From each town came reports of the most tremendous scandals. In one of our largest commercial towns the Judge was stated to have been appointed because he married a certain statesman's mistress, and he was known to be under heavy pecuniary debt to one of the most disreputable attorneys of the town, who had in consequence much practice in the Bankruptcy Court. In a large manufacturing town a witness reported that he had served, I think, twelve summonses on the Judge, who was said to be in debt to almost every officer of his court. In two others, a registrar or officer in charge of the funds had embezzled them and disappeared, and there was hardly any important town of which some scandal was not reported. Of course we could not but assent to the removal of a staff containing so many black sheep.

Finding Mr. Wright's assistance invaluable, William Rathbone asked him to accept a kind of general retainer to draw for him any Bills or amendments which he might wish to introduce,

and to advise him as to the legal bearing of measures before the House in which he was specially interested. This arrangement lasted for several years, until Mr. Wright's growing and brilliant success in his profession obliged him to discontinue it. During these years he drew for William Rathbone a number of Bills on such subjects as local government, registration, the discouragement of vexatious objections to voters, the institution of public prosecutors, the reform of the law of conspiracy as applied to masters and servants, the remuneration of attorneys and solicitors, etc.

The practical monopoly by the Executive Government of the right of initiating legislation had not gone so far in the seventies as it has been carried since, and a private member's Bill, if it dealt with a fairly non-contentious subject, had a more than negligeable chance of passing into law. Nevertheless, I do not think that any of the above Bills, except the Attorneys and Solicitors Remuneration Act, reached their fulfilment while still in the hands of William Rathbone and their original promoters. They were not on that account fruitless. Being skilfully drafted and based on information which no labour nor expense had been spared to make as accurate and exhaustive as possible, they were in nearly all the instances I have named made the basis, sometimes with little or no alteration, of Bills introduced by the Government.

The first instance of this occurred in 1869. The question of the legal position of Trades Unions was then being hotly agitated in and out of Parliament, and the Government under pressure had at length promised to bring in a Bill the following session. In the meantime the funds of Trades Unions were left without any effective legal protection, for although a recent Act had made it possible for them to prosecute criminally officials who embezzled their funds,—a right of which a previous judicial decision had deprived them,—they were still unable to recover the money or to take any action at civil law. William Rathbone asked for an interview with the Home Secretary, Mr. Bruce, and urged him to remove this palpable injustice, which was causing very bitter feeling, by putting through an *ad interim* measure at once. He was told that the Government was quite willing, but that so late in the session it was impossible to get a Bill prepared in time. He promptly pulled from his pocket a Bill ready drafted by Mr. R. S. Wright after consultation with Mr. Henry Crompton and other leaders of the Trades Unionists. It was accepted just as it stood, and hurriedly passed into law, in spite of bitter opposition in the House of Lords.

But it was in his own special subject of local government and local taxation that he did most with Mr. Wright's help to influence legislation.

The hope of doing something to promote reforms in these matters had been one of the principal inducements to him to enter Parliament, and he looked upon the realisation of this hope as his chief political task. The degree of his success is very difficult to measure. He never expected or attempted to carry a Bill of his own, for a Bill for the general reorganisation of local government would have been too important a measure to be carried through by a private member. But neither did he ever have the satisfaction of seeing a Bill carried through by the Government of the thorough, comprehensive, and simple character that he and his friends desired. For nineteen years after he moved his first resolution in his first session urging the need for a radical reconstruction of the system of local government and local taxation, no large measure of reform at all was carried, and when the Acts of 1888 and 1894 at last brought about a reconstruction, it was upon rather different lines, and introduced a more complicated machinery than he had advocated. Still, it seems to be held by those most competent to judge, that his quiet, persistent advocacy did do much to prevent the question from slipping altogether into the background, and that without the exposure of defects, the collection and arrangement of information, the drafting of schemes of reform, and all the other preliminary tilling of the ground which he and the

friends and fellow-members who worked with him effected, the constructive legislation of later years would hardly have been possible. Mr. James Bryce, in some notes upon his old friend's parliamentary work, with which he has been good enough to furnish me, says that "the reconstruction of our Local Government which was effected by the Acts of 1888 and 1893 was largely due to his efforts."

The specific proposals brought forward upon a question so intricate and technical as local government and taxation need not be described in detail here, but the main notions which underlay and prompted all his work upon the subject are simple enough. As was natural to him, his interest sprang from a practical conviction born of experience and observation, that certain changes were necessary to the well-being of the people, rather than, in the first instance, from an intellectual adherence to any economic theory of taxation or political theory of government. Thus, in giving an address upon the subject to the Richmond Hall Liberal Club in 1872, he said :

> It was indeed the incidence of local taxation on local administration which first led me to take an interest in local taxation. I found much unnecessary waste of life and health, and deterioration of character, in our crowded courts and streets. I found that the attempts of our Vestry and others to remedy these evils were made more difficult from the want of uniformity of administration in

the country. I found that this want of uniformity threw on those who attempted to do their work efficiently the duties of those who did not, and on classes not the most wealthy and able to bear it, a burden which ought to be shared by all. I became thoroughly satisfied that by a better system, and by bringing home to all classes their responsibilities and their duties, the waste of health, life, and virtue might be diminished, the pressure be made less unequal, and its total amount ultimately diminished, and that we should thereby be able to secure better value for our expenditure. Indeed in accepting the honourable but deeply responsible position of your representative, it was one of my most earnest wishes that I might be able in some degree to forward this work.

He started from the obvious point of the unfair distribution of the burden of the rates among different classes :

The defect which has contributed most to draw public attention to the incidence of local taxation, and especially to its rapid increase, is, of course, its unequal pressure—unequal whether considered in relation to ability to pay, or to benefits derived from the expenditure provided for by such taxation. Personal property which does not pay rates has enormously increased, and its wealthiest possessors, manufacturers, merchants, etc., who have in many cases caused and profited by the aggregation of labourers, which has made the expenditure necessary, do not pay their fair share of local taxation. As I stated in the House of Commons, whereas many wealthy merchants, shipowners, or brokers, are paying in local rates and taxes only 1½ per cent, and as far as I have been able to learn

few pay as much as 2 per cent; the labouring man in their employ is paying $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent; the young doctor or other professional man $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent; and the retail tradesman 5 to 12 per cent or even more, of their respective incomes. This mode of taxation falls very heavily on professional men, small shopkeepers, and also on the classes just one remove from pauperism: classes whose rent is a very heavy item in their out-goings. Unfortunately also rates increase most rapidly in those periods of distress which at the same time cause a serious reduction in the income of these classes.

Some years before entering Parliament he had collected figures in Liverpool on which this calculation of the proportion paid by the several classes was based. He was fond of citing from these the cases of a merchant and shipowner, deriving an income of £15,000 from a capital of £150,000, who paid £62 in rates on the £1100 rent of his counting-house and warehouses, and £65 on his suburban residence assessed at £450 a year, *i.e.* less than 1 per cent; of a young doctor, who from a fluctuating income of about £600 paid £14 on a £60 house, or 2 per cent; of a labourer earning 24s. a week and living in a cottage at 4s. a week, who paid £2 : 8 : 9, or 4 per cent; and of a tradesman with income of under £1000, whose total assessment on his place of business and residence was £550; the total local taxes (tenant's share) £120, or 12 per cent on his income.

The evil of this state of things was not in his

eyes merely its direct injustice measured in money, serious though this was. It was open to another objection, which would remain valid even if it could be shown that the total proportion contributed to public funds by the several classes was equalised in other ways.

None were better fitted by training and experience to secure the efficient and economical administration of local affairs than merchants and manufacturers; yet feeling the direct pressure of local taxation so little, they took small interest in its fluctuations or excess, and as a class held themselves very much aloof from the duties of local government. Thus he noted that he was the only merchant on the Select Vestry of the parish of Liverpool, of which the poor rate sometimes rose to £180,000. Of the other twenty-five members, one was a manufacturer and nine were owners of cottage property, who, under the compounding clause, themselves paid the rates. In the adjoining parish of Toxteth, out of eighteen guardians, no less than eight were cottage owners. Such a withdrawal of a whole class, and that one of the most efficient classes of the community, from the personal performance of their duties as citizens was a grave peril, as the example of the United States proved then, and has continued to illustrate ever since. Of course, the withdrawal was not wholly the result of the unequal incidence of

taxation, nor was it the sole cause of inefficient administration. The machinery of local government was radically defective. Until it was reconstructed it would be almost impossible to do the work properly, and the best class of men would never be persuaded in any large number to attempt the task. In his speeches to his constituents and to the House of Commons, he frequently drew attention, as other public men had done, to some of the worst confusions and anomalies of the existing state of things. One or two quotations will give the gist of the matter :

> Legislation for local affairs has proceeded piecemeal. Instead of establishing one primary area, with one consolidated authority for all purposes of local administration and taxation, we have, whenever any new work had to be done, created a new special district, and a new taxing and spending authority. The result has been the creation, in the same area, of a number of taxing and spending bodies, each having its expensive array of collectors, officers, and machinery. The interest of the ratepayer is frittered away by multiplied elections. Their vigilance is rendered impossible by the number of spending authorities who have to be watched ; and the danger of wasteful expenditure and mismanagement is consequently greatly increased.

He was accustomed to illustrate this by a variety of instances, taken from different parts of the country. Perhaps the most striking of these was one which he quoted from a paper read by

Mr. Hagger, Clerk to the Liverpool Select Vestry, before the Poor Law Conference of 1877. Speaking of the confusion of areas and rates in Liverpool, Mr. Hagger said :

By Liverpool I mean the continuous succession of buildings constituting what would be properly called the town. It comprises or extends into three Poor Law areas —the parish of Liverpool, the West Derby Union, and the extra-parochial township of Toxteth Park.

When the county was divided into unions, the parish of Liverpool, which was then conterminous with the municipal borough of Liverpool, was formed into a separate Poor Law district as a single parish, and twenty-three of the surrounding townships were formed into the West Derby Union. Subsequently, the municipal borough was extended, so as to include two of the adjacent townships and portions of two others. Then the township of Toxteth Park was separated from the West Derby Union, and formed into a distinct Poor Law area, under a separate board of guardians. There have been also formed within the same area eleven local board districts and a second municipal borough, that of Bootle. Thus there are within this area—which is practically that of the West Derby Union—two municipal councils, three boards of guardians, eleven local boards of health, twenty-four bodies of overseers ; and there are, besides, five burial boards, two school boards, and one highway board, making a total of forty-eight local authorities acting in complete independence of each other ; the complication being increased by the fact that a single board exercises its different functions over different areas. Thus the West Derby Board of Guardians have control over the whole

twenty-two townships in the union for Poor Law purposes, whilst they are the rural sanitary authority in only ten of them, and the educational authority in eighteen-and-a-half.

Mr. Goschen, in a speech made in December 1881, gave an even more curious example of the confusion of areas and rates. His property in Sussex, with an aggregate valuation of about £1100, was situated, he said, in two counties, in four parishes, in three highway districts, and in five ecclesiastical divisions. The complex whole was so entirely an enigma to him, and the method of administration was so difficult to trace, that he had never interested himself in it to the extent of giving a single local vote. He had not, however, been equally successful in ridding himself of his financial responsibilities for the place, for in one year he had received no less than eighty-seven demand notes, one of his four parishes sending him eight rate papers for a sum of 12s. 4d. in all.

Over an expenditure so broken up, and incurred under so divided a responsibility, it was impossible for the ratepayer to exercise any effective vigilance. Its growth, which could only be checked locally, was not locally known, and could scarcely have been controlled even if it had been known. The electors were confused and irritated by the number of elections, and took no intelligent interest in any. Capable men did not care to serve on

bodies so numerous and petty, and the supply of capacity was not large enough to go round. The result was a real impoverishment of the national life. Men who, if the work of local government had been made sufficiently honourable and attractive, would have discovered in it ample scope for their powers and legitimate ambitions, now found the life of the provinces unbearably dull, and as soon as they had made enough money moved to London, where they were swamped in the crowd, or to those parts of the country which offered special resources to the idle. In the meantime, under local bodies admittedly far poorer than they should be in men of education, experience of large affairs, or independent social position, and emancipated by their very multiplicity and insignificance from the salutary check of publicity, the amount of local taxation and of local indebtedness had increased with startling rapidity, out of all proportion to the growth in the value of the property on which it was levied.

Much of the increased expenditure was no doubt right and necessary, an inevitable result of the extended functions which local bodies were called upon to perform, and of improved standards of sanitation, education, etc. But it was notorious that much of it was administered wastefully and unprofitably. In any case, its growth should not be allowed to go on in the dark, unscrutinised

and uncontrolled, and, except by a few public men and statisticians, ignored. The weight of taxation laid by local bodies on the present generation was serious, but what mattered far more was their unlimited power of burdening with debt the industry of the future.

Such, expressed in briefest and baldest outline, were the chief of the defects upon which William Rathbone dwelt, with varying illustration, corroborative facts and figures, and with proposals for amendment, in a score of speeches, to the House and among his constituents, in pamphlets, articles in the reviews, and letters to the *Times*. There were, of course, other local government reformers, notably Mr. Goschen, Mr. Stansfeld, and Sir Massey Lopes, who harped upon the same string. But the discussions on this dry theme were usually left principally to experts, and excited little general interest in the House. It may be said that this was so, because no great contentious measure dealing with local government had been before the House since the new Poor Law of 1834. But there were measures which would have been found contentious enough, if the House had been awake to their importance. Thus in his parliamentary diary for June 7, 1869, William Rathbone notes :

> Mr. Goschen's Assessed Rates Bill restoring compounding passed second reading without a division and with slight opposition. Strange to say, Mr. Hibbert's

Municipal Franchise Bill reducing the period of residence qualifying for municipal franchise to one year, and almost trebling some constituencies, and giving municipal votes to women, was ordered to be read a third time without any opposition whatever.

To a new member who cared more for local administration than any other political question, this indifference must have seemed in depressing contrast to the excitement aroused by Bills affecting the least change in imperial taxation or the parliamentary franchise. He was quite willing, however, to risk being considered a bore on the subject if he could hope to do his share in gradually rousing the House to a more adequate sense of its vital bearing upon the well-being of the people at almost every point, physical, material, and moral.

During his first session his place in the House was next to Mr. Samuel Whitbread, who had already represented Bedford for seventeen years. Mr. Whitbread, besides being very kind in imparting to his neighbour his own extensive knowledge of the ways of the House, and of the opinions, histories, and peculiarities of its members, was also interested in local government, and for many years they did much work upon it together. Outside the House, he relied greatly upon the help of Sir John M'Neill, who, since the affairs of the Crimean Commission had first made them

acquainted, had held the office of head of the Scottish Poor Law Board.

His brother-in-law, Colonel Ponsonby Cox of the Royal Engineers, also gave him much help in local government matters.

His first effort to bring the question before the House took the form of a Resolution in which he urged, among other points, that grants should be made from national sources in aid of Poor Law expenditure. This he held to be the only practicable means of compelling personalty, which it was impossible to tax in the locality, to contribute its fair share to local taxation. If the grant took the form of a fixed proportion, not of actual expenditure, but of the estimated minimum expenditure, it could not encourage extravagance, and being made conditional upon efficiency, somewhat after the mode of education grants, it would bring about closer co-operation between the central and the local authorities, more effective inspection, and ultimately greater uniformity of administration. It should, he suggested, be given in aid of the cost of sickness and imbecility, so as to mitigate the unfairness of the existing system, by which the parishes reputed to have the best infirmaries and asylums were obliged to bear the full cost of the poor who invaded them from parishes which had made no adequate provision. Later on he often urged that the grant should take the form of a

contribution towards the cost of maintaining workhouses, so as to equalise the cost of outdoor and indoor relief, and so remove from the guardians all inducement to prefer the demoralising method of outdoor relief on the ground of its supposed cheapness.

Another change for which in later years he often pleaded, and to which he attached considerable importance, was the division of rates between the owner and the occupier. The main grounds of this proposal, which was recommended by Mr. Goschen's Committee in 1870, and formed part of his abortive Bill of 1871, were two: first, that under the existing law any increase in rates must fall during the currency of the lease, however long, entirely upon the occupier, and that in times of depression this was severely felt; secondly, that it was desirable that both classes, owners and occupiers, should feel the direct and immediate pressure of local taxation, and all the fluctuations in that pressure, in order that they might have every inducement to keep a sharp eye upon and, if possible, take part in local administration.

With the same object, he thought that division of rates ought to be accompanied by direct representation of owners. This would bring on to the local bodies a few men of greater leisure and wider experience than the majority of those elected under the existing suffrage.

Hearing from Baron Mackey, afterwards Lord Reay, that the system of local government in Holland was particularly comprehensive and yet simple, and that it gave general satisfaction, he, with Baron Mackey's assistance, engaged a competent Dutch lawyer to write him a detailed report on the system. An abstract of this was prepared as a pamphlet, and a copy sent to every member of Parliament.

In 1874 he and Mr. Whitbread agreed that it would be worth while to get a thoroughly satisfactory scheme of local government reform drawn up in the form of a Bill, so that, even if it were impossible to introduce it, they might have something before them at which to aim, and might be able to see better the bearing of any proposals that might be introduced by others. They asked Mr. R. S. Wright to prepare such a scheme. Mr. Wright replied that it would be a very troublesome matter, and would take at least a year's work, but after some consideration he agreed to undertake it. After two months' work he reported that as things then were it was impossible for him or any one else to draw up a good scheme of local government, for that neither in any nor in all of the public offices did there exist, in a collected and digested form, the information upon which alone such a scheme could be based. This seemed to William Rathbone to

make the necessity for doing something even more pressing, and he persuaded Mr. Wright to undertake the collection and arrangement of the necessary material. This task occupied three years, although Mr. Wright, who struck William Rathbone as being one of the quickest workers he had ever known, gave it all the time that he could spare from his professional work. It was completed in 1877, in the form of two Memoranda, and was privately circulated among members of Parliament and others interested in the subject. In 1884, in view of an expected Local Government Bill, it was brought up to date by Mr Henry Hobhouse[1] and published.[2] In a form that could be compassed in a few hours' reading, it gave a description in outline of the various areas, bodies, and purposes of local government as they then existed, and a statement with numerous tables showing the condition of local taxation and indebtedness so far as it was possible to ascertain it. The last portion presented some "considerations with a view to the amendment of local government." The direction which reform should take, in the judgment of the authors, was upon many points made clear by a mere rehearsal of the defects revealed by the earlier pages of the Report. The prime necessity

[1] Now the Right Hon. Henry Hobhouse, M.P.

[2] *An Outline of Local Government and Local Taxation in England and Wales*, by R. S. Wright and Henry Hobhouse (W. Maxwell and Son, London).

was, of course, the consolidation and simplification of the existing chaos of areas, governing bodies, and rates. "So far as may be, local affairs ought to be administered in simple areas or aggregations of simple areas, without crossing or interlacing." The nature of these simple areas or units of administration was discussed. The larger boroughs and local board districts might, it was thought, be accepted as they stood ; as regards rural places the Union was, upon the whole, thought preferable as a primary area both to the parish and to any other newly devised form of area. Only two kinds of local boards were indicated as necessary — the primary authority in charge of the primary area, and county boards to which could be assigned all powers which could be better executed over a wider area. The mere consolidation of functions in each body would, it was thought, enhance the importance and interest of office in such a body, and so go far by itself to ensure that the work was well done.

The Memorandum when it appeared excited considerable interest, and a meeting of Liberals who had been former members of Cabinets was called to consider it. William Rathbone always believed that it greatly facilitated, if it did not make possible, the legislation of later years. In 1881 he and Mr. Whitbread commissioned Mr. Ilbert, now Sir Courtenay Ilbert, to draw with

Mr. Wright's help a Local Government Bill upon the lines indicated in the Report. This they placed unreservedly at the disposal of the Local Government Board. It could not, they knew, be carried as a private member's Bill, and they feared that the Government would be less likely to adopt it if it had once been introduced as such. In his Reminiscences, written before the Local Government legislation of 1894, William Rathbone said of this Bill :

> I believe it has been of no inconsiderable use, but I think it is much to be regretted that no Government has had the courage to adopt the thoroughness and simplicity of the measure. No doubt a certain amount of opposition would have been raised by sweeping away a number of small, confused, overlapping Local Government authorities and officers, but I am satisfied that the best chance of carrying any great Local Government measure would depend on the completeness and perfection of the measure giving force to the Government to overcome petty opposition. Bills are far oftener lost from being pared down to conciliate support, till there is not enough left in them to interest, and give the necessary strength to carry a good measure.

Among other subjects which specially interested William Rathbone, and on which he not unfrequently spoke in the House of Commons, was that of the licensing laws. In this he was to a great extent the mouthpiece of his brother, S. G. Rathbone, who, as an acting borough magistrate and

chairman of the visiting justices, had had much experience in the administration of the laws. Both brothers held views upon the question which did not exactly fit in with those of the recognised temperance advocates, and William Rathbone incurred a good deal of disfavour with the temperance party in Liverpool by his steady refusal to vote in favour of Sir Wilfrid Lawson's Permissive Prohibitory Liquor Bill. He based his refusal on the ground that experience of prohibition in other countries had shown that it never answered in any community where the habit of drinking was widely spread or deeply rooted among the people, and that "when attempts have been made to enforce laws for which the moral sense of the community has not been sufficiently prepared, they have invariably been disobeyed and evaded, respect for the law has been weakened, illicit drinking and all kinds of fraud and deception increased, and the police demoralised."[1] What seemed to him to be most needed in the early seventies was not so much more legislation, as a stricter administration of the law as it stood. He maintained that if the justices made a good use of the powers given them under the Acts of 1869 and 1872 to shut up houses doing a disorderly trade, they could enormously diminish the number of public-houses and the amount of drunkenness. He believed it

[1] Speech to his constituents.

to be a popular fallacy that a mere reduction in the number of public-houses of itself decreased drunkenness, unless it was brought about by, or at least unless it was accompanied by, closer inspection and more rigorous dealing with publicans who permitted drunkenness. As actually carried out, the policy of restriction of numbers rather, in his belief, hindered than helped strict administration, and thus brought about all the evils of a monopoly without the safeguards which the monopoly was intended to secure. It was this policy that had made possible the close organisation of the trade and its growing power both in national and municipal politics. It had secured to the holders of licenses immense profits, which not only enabled them to add to the attractions of their houses, and to turn the old-fashioned tavern into the magnificent modern gin-palace, but were used by the unscrupulous among them in extensive corruption, in suborning witnesses, and bribing or terrorising the police. It had thus made convictions much more difficult to obtain, and when obtained, it was almost impossible to get magistrates to endorse them on the license. Knowing the high monopoly value of the license, the magistrates argued that it was unfair to inflict so heavy a penalty as confiscation, or endorsements leading cumulatively to confiscation, for an offence for which the nominal legal penalty was only a few

pounds. Again, an endorsement might mean in one case a depreciation of £100, in another case of £500, and the inequality of incidence increased the seeming unfairness. This difficulty was especially felt in the towns, where the licensing magistrates were frequently the friends and colleagues in the town council of the leading public-house owners.

These considerations led William Rathbone and his brother to look back with regret to the much-abused system of open licensing, or, as it is sometimes called, free trade in licenses, as it had been tried in Liverpool from 1862 to 1866. S. G. Rathbone, who had been on the licensing bench at the time, was then strongly opposed to the experiment, and was perhaps the leading spirit in the agitation for its rejection. The disappointing effects of restriction when restored, and his widening experience as a magistrate, had convinced him that he was mistaken, and had made him a decided advocate of open licensing. A letter which appeared in the *Times* of May 21, 1872, replying to an attack upon the Liverpool experiment, was, I believe, by his pen. At any rate, the arguments and facts it contains coincide very closely with the lines of the evidence given by him before the Lords' Commission on Intemperance in 1877, and it was more than once quoted by his brother William in order to contradict what seemed to be

the very erroneous impression which prevailed as to the facts of the experiment and the reasons which had led to its abandonment. As there is reason to think that these impressions are still current, and as the subject has a good deal of intrinsic interest, both historical and practical, it has seemed well to give the letter in full :

To the Editor of the "Times"

Sir—The *Spectator* of the 11th May contains a statement that "free licensing has been tried by the Liverpool magistrates, and has produced results so ghastly that they have recoiled from their own experiment." As this statement represents an impression which is very general, though far from accurate, may I trespass upon your space to give some explanation in reference to it? In the first place, the magistrates who introduced the system of free licensing—that is of giving every respectable applicant who had suitably constructed premises a license—never recoiled from their experiment. The system was abandoned at a licensing session, when the composition of the bench had, by the retirement of some magistrates and the addition of others, been changed from what it had been when the system had been adopted. None of the magistrates who had favoured open licensing ever gave in their adherence to a return to the restrictive system. In the second place, I know of no evidence which shows that any ghastly results followed the introduction of free licensing; certainly the police statistics do not point to such a conclusion. The free licensing system was adopted at the licensing session held in the

autumn of 1862, and abandoned in the autumn of 1866. The number of apprehensions for drunkenness during the official police year which closed in autumn, 1862, was 12,362, and for the year 1866, 12,494, so that at the end of the free licensing period the apprehensions had not increased in proportion to the increase of population. The restrictive system of issuing licenses having been returned to at the licensing session of 1866, and Sir Selwin-Ibbetson's Beerhouse Act of 1869 having brought the issue of beerhouse licenses under magisterial control, there has been a steady decrease in the number of drinking-houses; and the number of public-houses and beerhouses, which in 1866 amounted to 2806, is now only 2313. The steady decrease in the number of drinking-houses has been accompanied by an equally steady increase in the number of apprehensions for drunkenness, which for the last year of free licensing, 1866, was 12,494; while for the police year ending in autumn 1871, after five years of restrictive policy, it was 22,947. These figures are, of course, in themselves not conclusive, many causes combining to influence the apprehensions for drunkenness; but, at all events, they show that the police statistics of this town, so much relied upon by the advocates of restriction, afford no evidence that free licensing injured the morals of the inhabitants.

There are some other curious figures in reference to this question, from which, perhaps, more reliable conclusions can be drawn. In 1862 the number of public-house keepers unable to pay their municipal rates during the first nine months of the year was only 332; in 1866 the number had increased to 580. This difference in meeting rates was very significant, and appears to me to show that the aggregate profits and sales of liquor did not

grow in proportion to the number of houses selling it, and that the new houses, far from living wholly on the new trade they created, lived on the custom they drew from houses which were either worse situated or sold worse liquor. The free licensing, in fact, was followed by a great fall in the monopoly profits, which licensees had before been able to obtain, and a consequent depreciation in the value of licenses. Magistrates who had voted for free licensing were kept out of the Town Council by the influence of the publicans, and this really had a great deal to do with the reversal of the policy, and I must further point out that free licensing was tried in Liverpool under most unfavourable circumstances. The principle was adopted by a vote of the majority of the justices, and it was known to be liable to be abandoned at any time if the constitution of the bench should be altered. Many licensees, therefore, kept houses open in bad situations, in the hope that the free licensing system would be abandoned, and that a return to a restrictive policy might ultimately restore a value to their licenses.

The effects of free licensing, if secured by law—that is to say, the effects of a law which entitled every respectable man, with suitably constructed premises, to obtain a license on payment of the excise duties—would, I firmly believe, be most beneficial.

1. The competition of the new licensees who would under such a law be from time to time entering the trade, would shut up houses badly situated, or which sold bad liquor.

2. The disorderly houses would be closed under the police penalties, because the owners, deprived of monopoly profits, would be unable to secure immunity for their offences by bribing the police. To show how ineffectual

the present police is to enforce the law, I will merely state that while in 1871 there were 22,947 apprehensions for drunkenness, there were only 51 publicans and 100 beer-house keepers fined under police informations. Now, as many of these informations were laid for selling at illegal hours, the number fined for serving drunken men with liquor must have been absolutely insignificant. But, in fact, no one can go to the crowded quarters in any of our large towns without seeing the law in this matter openly violated. It would be a mistake to blame the police authorities. So long as the value of licenses and the scale of profits are kept up by monopoly, so long will the large profits be used as hush-money to protect the licenses from forfeiture, and so long would any attempt to use the general police of a town to enforce the law against publicans and beer-sellers simply end in the corruption and demoralisation of many of the force. It is, therefore, only under very exceptional circumstances that the ordinary police on duty are allowed to enter a public-house. If any of your correspondents think this state of things exceptional and peculiar to Liverpool, perhaps they will furnish you with the exact proportion which the fines inflicted on publicans for serving drunken men bear in their own towns to the number of persons apprehended for drunkenness. It must further be remembered in examining such figures that only such men are apprehended as are quarrelling or are helplessly drunk. Numbers of drunken men never fall into the hands of the police. Yet in the face of such facts peer after peer in the debate on the Government Liquor Bill declared that the law was efficiently administered.

3. An open licensing system would deprive the publicans of the monopoly profits by the aid of which they can supply

their premises with every kind of adventitious attraction such as no other shopkeeper can afford. Go where you will, the public-house is the best lighted and the most decorated place, and nearly if not quite the only place where billiards, bagatelle, newspapers, and comforts are brought within the reach of the working man. In these houses the loser generally pays for the use of the billiard table or skittle ground by "standing" liquor for himself and the winner. Now, no one grudges the working man these recreations; the objectionable thing is that he should be compelled, as at present, to drink his way to them. If the publicans did not supply them as means of selling liquor, they would be supplied by others for a small money payment, and not made, as at present, temptations to drink.

Last, but not least, if the monopoly were abolished the conduct of our municipal and parliamentary elections, and indeed all our political life, would be elevated. The artificial profits and enormous fortunes now accumulated out of the trade are largely used for the purpose of securing political influence by the aid of which the monopoly may be protected.

The theory and practice of the present law are that licenses shall be proportioned to the wants of a neighbourhood. Under this law it is always sufficient for an applicant for a license to show that the neighbourhood for which it is sought is without a public-house, to ensure the concession of the license. The Government Licensing Bill does not propose any change in the law in this respect, and while the law thus provides that liquor shall be systematically brought within easy reach of every one, it is idle to maintain that a few public-houses more or less materially increase or diminish the temptations to

drunkenness. No human ingenuity can devise a law which shall at the same time place liquor within the reach of the sober and keep it out of the reach of the drunken; yet this is really the impossible aim of all systems of partial restriction. The restrictive system, at least in our large towns, entails all the evils of monopoly without any corresponding advantages. Mr. Henley gave some figures in the debate on the Permissive Bill to show that the relative amount of drunkenness in towns was not at all in proportion to the multitude of public-houses.

The real solution of the liquor question is, then, to throw the trade open on equal terms to all willing to enter it, and to pay a good high excise license duty, and thus destroy the monopoly out of which many of the moral and all the political evils of the trade now arise.—I am, etc., A LIVERPOOL MAN.

Another experiment in open licensing in which the two brothers took a great interest was that carried out in the Prescot division of Lancashire, a district which included Garston, Woolton, Childwall, and Hale, and was inhabited by large numbers of navvies and Irish labourers. There, largely by the influence of two of the county magistrates, Mr. Robert Neilson and Mr. Edward Gibbon, the policy was pursued for over fifteen years of granting a license to every respectable man with suitable premises who applied for it, and at the same time administering the laws repressing drunkenness very strictly, with the result that the number of public-

houses did not increase at all, while the number of apprehensions for drunkenness decreased very largely.

The Report which many years later William Rathbone obtained from Mr. Fanshawe, whom he had commissioned to visit the United States to investigate the different systems of licensing, only confirmed his earlier opinion that, upon the whole, the most successful system was that which combined a rigid enforcement of the law with the granting of licenses to all who applied for them, subject only to a high licensing fee and to strict inquiries as to the character of the holders and the suitability of the premises. Mr. Bryce, in the notes from which I have already quoted, says of this Report: "It still remains a most useful record and criticism of the various experiments which American State Legislatures have made; and if the liquor question could have been extricated from the quagmire of party, a reform upon the lines which he had indicated would have been long ago effected."

As, however, such a policy would have been equally unpopular with the trade and with the bulk of the temperance party, he recognised that it was not in England, for the present at least, within the sphere of practical politics. In the direction of practical reforms he therefore contented himself with urging that the endorsement

of convictions on the license should be made compulsory, instead of being at the discretion of the magistrate, and with other minor suggestions tending to stricter dealing with offences against the law.

In working at this question, as at the question of local government and taxation, his energies and what influence he possessed were thrown less into the effort to secure a particular form of remedy, than into the plea for a more scientific and conscientious way of approaching the whole matter. In dealing with the licensing laws he had no need to complain, as he had done about local government, that the importance of the question was ignored. The enthusiasm of the reformers and the self-interest of the trade ensured plenty of legislation, of parliamentary inquiries, and of weighty blue-books. But the Parliaments of the seventies and eighties pursued their inquiries, he thought, too much as though they knew of no country but England, and of no times save the present. The appeal to the experience of foreign countries, which the work of a number of sociologists has since made even tediously familiar, was then comparatively seldom heard. For over twenty years he did his best to persuade successive Governments to send a commission to the United States to inquire into the working of the innumerable experiments in methods of licensing that may be

found there. When, finally, he took the matter into his own hands and dispatched Mr. Fanshawe, he was only doing what he held that Government should have done years before.

Apart from the questions for which he individually cared the most, the position of representative of one of the largest constituencies in the country in itself entailed very heavy work. A great port has many special interests,—shipowning, mercantile, manufacturing,—and the leaders of all these expected their member to understand and interpret to Parliament their views upon any legislation which affected or which they deemed likely to affect them. A port like Liverpool, which serves as one of the main gateways through which the population of the United Kingdom streams, depositing in its passage much of its flotsam and jetsam, has social problems of its own, and upon the solution of these it was his duty to know his mind. Perhaps the responsibility was more felt then than it is now, because it was less split up. Each of the three members for Liverpool represented the whole city, and was identified in the House with the name of Liverpool and not with that of any obscure section of it. On all non-party questions they worked harmoniously together and were in frequent communication. Mr. S. R. Graves, the senior member, was as able and suitable a representative of a great commercial community as it

could well have found, and his premature death, which occurred early in 1873, deprived William Rathbone of a personal friend as well as of a greatly valued colleague. As Lord Sandon was at first in delicate health and was afterwards absorbed by his duties as a Minister, Mr. Graves's death also threw upon the minority member during the seven years for which he continued to hold the seat by far the greater bulk of the local work. As member for Liverpool he was placed on most of the general committees on the business of the House or on subjects of political importance, and was usually on that account excused from committees on Private Bills.

Throughout the seventies, the parliamentary question which perhaps touched Liverpool interests most nearly was that raised by Mr. Plimsoll's agitation for the better protection of merchant seamen. The strong benevolent instincts of Mr. Plimsoll had been stirred and his excitable temperament set on fire by stories which had come before him of ships sent to sea in an unseaworthy condition by their owners, sometimes from carelessness, sometimes deliberately for the sake of the insurance money. He had made the subject his own, and had collected a mass of information upon it, and like most enthusiasts he was disposed to exaggerate his case. His Bill was intended to make such crimes

for the future impossible, by bringing shipping under inspection and control of Government, and it was strongly opposed by the majority of shipowners. Many of the general arguments they used were of the familiar individualistic type, and would be equally applicable to factory and all other legislation regulating the conditions of employment; and whether valid or not, it must be admitted that the verdict of the times has gone against them. But the more valuable part of this criticism was directed against the practicability in detail of Mr. Plimsoll's proposals. These were very drastic, including the survey of all ships by Board of Trade officials before leaving port, restriction of deck-loading, and the observance of a legally fixed load-line. William Rathbone agreed with the shipowners in distrusting many of the proposals as impracticable, and in thinking that they went much too far in removing from the shipowners the responsibility of deciding whether a ship was seaworthy—a responsibility which, owing to the variety and complicity of the conditions on which seaworthiness depend, could not be exercised as effectively by any one else.

Socially and physically the life in Parliament suited him very well, especially during those first twelve years when he was young and strong enough to bear its fatigues without strain. The

very late hours, later then than now, tried him less than most men, for he had the useful faculty of being able to take short naps at will at almost any hour and in almost any conditions, and to wake up refreshed. He did not attempt to come backwards and forwards frequently from Liverpool, but settled himself with his family for the six months of the session in a house in Princes Gardens, close to Hyde Park, where he took his early morning rides and met other members; and in the intervals between superlatively vigorous gallops, on which the Park constables soon learned to turn their backs discreetly, he got through a good deal of informal business. When working at or towards any special Bill, he was fond of giving frequent small breakfast and dinner parties, to which members of all political parties and all degrees of notability were invited to meet experts on the question in hand, and general conversation at table would be followed by an hour or two of hard work. In this way and in the House itself he got through an immense amount of a justifiable and innocent form of lobbying. Personal intercourse gave him an opportunity of kindling in others, perhaps occupying more influential positions or more apt at catching the ear of the House than himself, something of his own glowing sense of the vital and human relations of subjects usually regarded as dry and prosaic; it was thus his

favourite and probably his most fruitful method of work. If he could father upon any one an idea, or a possible next step, or an amendment to a Bill, he did not care in the least whether its real paternity was ever recognised. Often he rather preferred that others should get the credit of the offspring of his brain in order that he might be the freer to proclaim their merits and push their claims.

His single-mindedness was so transparent that the most cynical member of the House of Commons could scarcely pretend to doubt it, and there are clear proofs that it gave him a power of private influence out of proportion to his apparent political importance. This was comparatively more marked in his relations with his political opponents than with his own side. The leaders of a party have a large and difficult team to drive. It is perhaps natural that, other things being equal, consideration and concessions and offers of place should rather be reserved for those whose loyalty needs strengthening than wasted on one who lets it be clearly seen that no amount of these things would secure his support of a policy he thought wrong, and no amount of official neglect alienate it from a policy he thought right. A man's influence with his opponents is not affected by these considerations, and if they listen to him at all, it is for the sake of what he has to

say. What William Rathbone had to say was usually said in private. He did not often raise his voice in debate, and when he did it was as a rule on some single point about which he conceived himself to have special experience or sources of knowledge. In Mr. Bryce's words, "He did not speak often, but he always spoke clear good sense, practical and relevant."

A few extracts from his letters at this time may illustrate these aspects of his work.

To his Wife

16 Pall Mall, *March* 12, 1869.

I have had a very interesting conversation with the Bishop of Derry to-day. After speaking on the subject I went to see him about, which I will tell you some day, we began about the Irish Church.[1] He does not take a very hopeful view of things, but I think is wisely disposed to make the best of what can be done rather than sit down and cry. He thinks the grievance of the curates very great, and so it seems to me. The poor men, after being brought up to look forward to advancement, receive their compensation in such a way that they are bound down for life to £75 a year. But I daresay this may be modified if the members of the Church will only wisely set themselves to work to get rid of such real grievances.

We had another discussion—funny enough between a Churchman and a Unitarian—in which I ventured to

[1] The Irish Church Bill was passing through the House.

give him my experience of how to raise the winds. I think he was a little encouraged at hearing my sanguine suggestions, which amount to this—to take all the money paid over by Government for endowments, and demand from the Churchmen boldly, and at once, that they should find all the money which the investment of that endowment would not find to pay the annual life-interest of the working clergy. This would take advantage of the feeling which now exists before it cools down, and get the Churchmen into the habit of giving, which all dissenters are brought up to. I do not see why the English Church people should not bleed for the Irish as well as the heathen, and Exeter Hall turn its attention to more useful purposes than hitherto.

16 PALL MALL, *March* 14, 1869.

If I could do without eating, I think the work would be far less severe than Liverpool. For most things one is not personally and directly responsible, and one feels so powerless in regard to them that the strain is not half so great as seeing such quantities of work wanting doing which one feels one could do if one could find or make time, strength, and means to attend to them. Then the society is so much more lively and refreshing than where all are in cotton and local politics, and talk shop anywhere and everywhere. I think I shall find it by no means an unhealthy life, particularly when I have you to make my rides more of a pleasure and less of a constitutional duty. I have very little doubt I shall like my new life immensely if only I can feel at ease that I am doing the best work that lay before me. I am more satisfied than I was that it was the right course for me to come, but of course it is too soon to be able to judge: people are very kind at

first, but it takes time for them and for oneself to find out whether one has the ability and the thoroughness of work to fit one for so responsible a position.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, *July* 22, 1869.

I must just tell you two jokes of C——'s. We were talking about Tait's worldly speech in the House to-night, and he said, that being asked what he thought of his previous speech by a man, he said: "Well, Tait is an old friend of mine, and I like him very much, and I don't wish to cant at all, but I should just like the faintest flavour of religion in an Archbishop's speech on a Church question."

C—— went on to say that he often went to argue questions before the Archbishop at Lambeth, and that his feeling always was that these men would necessarily be damned *ex officio*—it was all far too splendid to be followed by anything else. This was in answer to my saying that my feeling with a merchant was, that when he got over £200,000 he was too rich for the kingdom of heaven.

14 PRINCES GARDENS, *March* 13, 1870.

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I had a long talk the other evening with Howell, one of the leaders of the Trades Unions and working men—a very good fellow. He says the Liberal Party are losing ground much, for many reasons. Some of their economics are considered harsh and partial; then he says the same that Ashton told me—that everywhere there is less of geniality and *bonhomie* in the treatment of the working classes by the Liberals than by the Conservatives.

I have been hard at work with Stansfeld and Lowe to show them that their attempt to reduce the Savings Bank interest is founded on a blunder. I think I have shaken them a good deal, and nearly convinced them that instead of losing £120,000 a year they are not losing one-tenth that sum, and if so, it is really not worth weakening their popularity and consequent power to effect more important reforms. Sir R. Palmer went through my Solicitor and Attorney Bill (a Bill to establish freedom of contract in law, and do away, I hope, with the system of charging by length of document and number of items) with me, and suggested some amendments which I have agreed to, and now I hope he will support the Bill, and that I shall have a chance of carrying it.

Last night I dined with Mr. Goschen. Dowse, Parker, Sir W. Wedderburn (a Radical Scotch baronet), Dr. Bridges (a new medical Poor Law inspector), and one or two others were there. It was a very pleasant party. Goschen has sent a special commissioner to report on the boarding out of pauper children in Scotland. His report will be out in a few days. It will be very favourable as to the practical result of the system, but he says it will be impossible to carry it out in England as fully as it is done in Scotland, as they could not sanction such sleeping arrangements as often exist in Scotland. If they did there would be sure to be rows and reaction.

14 PRINCES GARDENS, *April* 9, 1870.

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We have had a very heavy week, but I cannot say a very satisfactory one. We have got on very slowly with the Irish Land Bill, and, unfortunately, Gladstone has

had to put the screw on by treating opposition as a vote of want of confidence rather too often, and people are getting a little sore about it. Plunket, the new member for Dublin University, made a splendid speech the other night on undenominational education in Ireland, and it was evident that if Government had gone against mixed education they would have been left in a hopeless minority, and deserted even by their staunchest followers. But I think Gladstone's speech commits him for the future to no tampering with this question, and so far it was good. I am afraid Gladstone is pushing things a little too far about the higher classes of leases in Ireland, for which a case for interference, to the extent to which he wishes to go, has hardly been made out. Sir Roundel Palmer—who occupies a most wonderfully influential position in the House on account of his perfect and transparent integrity and simplicity—has almost been at direct issue with the Government, though he is evidently anxious to go with them as far as possible. If the Government force the point again as a question of want of confidence, they may carry it, but it will be at the cost of a great deal of rankling soreness. I hope, however, that during Easter this matter may be arranged, and if so, there may be some hope of the Land Bill getting through.

I have not got on very fast with my Attorneys' and Solicitors' Bill, though I think I have got over all the really disputed points. There is such an amount of concealed animosity to it on the part of barristers, who think it will interfere with excessive fees to counsel, that I do not feel very sanguine, though it is merely a question of getting the House for half-an-hour to listen, that it may pass through the remaining stages. Trying to get this half-hour involves very hard work and sitting in the

House to the last. Last night we did not leave the House till past three o'clock: we were kept by the religious fight on the inspection of convents and monasteries. . . . The Attorney-General was very complimentary to me yesterday about the Public Prosecutor's Bill, which I have had prepared, and which I have some hope the Government are going to take up, if not absolutely, as the basis of the measure they intend to introduce. But, please, this must not transpire, for it would not do to have it supposed that Government had adopted a Bill of a private member instead of carrying out one of their own. I consider myself very lucky to have got hold of so very able a draftsman as Mr. Wright, who possesses the confidence of many members of the Government, before he is too busy to be available by private members; and I intend to make the most of him while I can. He is probably the man whom the Attorney-General would have got to draw the Bill for himself, which gives me a great pull.

14 PRINCES GARDENS, *June* 24, 1870.

I suppose we shall go into Committee upon the Education Bill to-day. —— had a long private talk with Gladstone yesterday. The latter was a good deal excited about the Education Bill. He said he had never made a more painful concession to the desire of unity than when he conceded the forbidding the use of the creed and catechisms in rate-aided schools; that he considered he had carried concession to the furthest point; and ——'s impression is that he will say when we go into Committee that, should he be left in a minority of his own party on any important question, he will withdraw the Bill, as he will not consent to carry his measures

by a majority composed chiefly of his opponents. I hope he will make no such attempt: I should think it a very hazardous one, but —— thinks it will be successful. The Government has certainly given way a great deal; and the present Education Bill, though very far from perfection, is one that a few years ago we should have accepted with open arms. Nor do I see how our carrying it now will prevent our improving it afterwards. On the contrary, I conceive that by so doing schools will be built and the way prepared for improving the system in whatever direction experience may show to be most desirable.

I rather hope my Attorneys' and Solicitors' Bill may pass the third reading in the House of Lords on Monday without any very serious mutilation. If so, I think it will open the way for great reform in our law system. The Public Prosecutor's Bill is, I fear, in great danger of being shelved for the session on account of the pressure of business and the bitter, though not openly expressed, hostility of the London Bar. We shall see on Tuesday; if I cannot get into Committee then, I shall be very hopeless. On the whole, I think this session will not have been an empty one, and that a good deal of ground will have been cleared for further good legislation next year.

14 PRINCES GARDENS, *July* 3, 1870.

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The Attorneys' and Solicitors' Bill has passed the Lords, weakened a little but not in its most important point. The Public Prosecutor's Bill is down for Tuesday; if we cannot get it through Committee then, it will have to be among the slaughtered innocents for

this session. I have got a most thorough Corrupt Practices Bill drawn for consultation with Whitbread, Russell Gurney, the Attorney-General, and probably Gathorne Hardy; and on the 23rd I hope to have a breakfast of about fourteen men of both sides, to consider a Registration Bill, and these two measures, with the Government Election Bill, if properly amended, would make a complete code of election law, which I do believe would purify the whole electoral system and diminish expense enormously. I shall try hard to get Government to take them up, and if not, we must try to carry them through as private members' Bills, without the help of Government. It is a bold undertaking, but I am not hopeless of success, and it is worth attempting. If we do nothing more, I think we shall prepare the way and put a good ideal before the nation. Wright is so able a man, that while he is comparatively unknown and at leisure, I want to get as much out of him as I can. It is very pleasant work, as it brings one into intimate working with men on both sides really interested and earnest in such questions.

14 PRINCES GARDENS, *April* 29, 1871.

You will see things are not in a very satisfactory state now in politics. The Government have made a great mistake. When peace was declared and all danger of immediate collision was over, they ought at once to have revised their estimates, reducing them so as to avoid imposing any fresh taxation. Instead of this they persevered with their estimates, and carried them by the aid of the other side of the House. Now, when the estimates have to be met, the latter turn round, and joining with the

Radicals and economists, try to place the Government in a minority. Mr. Lowe's imprudent speech, in which he said, if he could, he would tax horses used in agriculture, and also would tax much more largely than at present real property, has irritated excessively the county members, who were already sore on account of Mr. Goschen's Bill proposing to transfer half the local taxes from the occupiers to the owners of real estate. Mr. Disraeli's speech the other night showed clearly that he thought there was a chance of the Ministry being thrown out and his party getting into office—it was, in fact, an election speech. A conversation I had with one of the leading members of the Conservative Party about Mr. Bruce's Licensing Bill confirmed this view. On the other hand, the advanced Liberals are extremely sore at the great lift given to the denominational schools last year, and still more at the increased expenditure, especially that for augmenting the standing Army. To add to these complications, the ten years' clause in the Licensing Bill has frightened dreadfully all people who own or have mortgages on public-houses. They are perfectly furious with terror. We did not think it a judicious addition to the Bill, but certainly we had no idea it would have depreciated public-house property as much as it has done. It does not please the Permissive Bill men any more than the licensed victuallers. The temperance men say that by giving licenses ten years to run, the Government has recognised vested interests in them, whereas before a license was only granted for the year. The publicans say it renders unnegociable property to which custom has given a vested interest in a license. Under ordinary circumstances the difficulty might easily have been settled by striking out the clause—and doing this would rather

improve the Bill than otherwise. But the Tories have resolved to play the licensed victuallers against the Government, and the licensed victuallers consequently are doubly unreasonable. Still I am in great hopes the matter will be settled, and some very experienced members have not a doubt the present crisis will blow over. But it is the most unpleasant thing we have had since I have been in Parliament, for one has constantly to be deciding how to vote on resolutions with the terms of which one can hardly disagree, but with the objects of which, as votes of want of confidence in the Government, one has no sympathy whatever.

14 PRINCES GARDENS, *July* 2, 1871.

I had a very pleasant journey up with Lord D—— and Lord Sandon. I like Sandon very much. D—— seems to feel as if we were being swept on hopelessly into democracy, and possibly repeal: as if there were no force of conviction in leaders on either side to hope from, and as if all we could do was to go with and try to guide the stream so that it might do as little harm as possible. Repeal he considers wicked, and to be resisted as utter ruin to Ireland. Towards the end of our journey he started the idea that religion was losing its hold on all classes, which both Sandon and I combated, and I was sorry, and so was Sandon, that we were stopped by arrival before we could conclude the argument. To my surprise he seemed unaware how much unbelief of a positive and cynical character pervaded the cultivated part of the upper classes in the eighteenth century — how Mandeville, Bolingbroke, and Hume, and a host of powerful writers, furnished the resources from which Voltaire and the French sceptics drew their arguments, and how dead

religion was even among most of those who did not take the trouble to disbelieve.

No doubt now there is more of enmity to religion in some of the working classes than there was then, and doubtless there is utter indifference in a very large portion of our working classes; but there seems to me more vitality in those who do pretend to believe—more uneasy consciousness in the upper and middle classes that religion requires exertion and self-sacrifice. I do believe we are as a nation at one of those great crises of our fate, and that if history is not to repeat itself in our decay and probable rapid fall from our high estate, Christianity very different from that of either the last or present century can alone prevent it. And it is not only in moments of depression and weariness, but far more when the mind is clearest, and faith and hope in what might be strongest, that I feel intense discontent with myself and the class of educated men above the pinch of poverty. It seems as if it would be so easy to make this world so different.

In Elberfeld, 252 visitors in a town of 50,000 have not only checked, but rolled back, the tide of pauperism, by sympathy, and counsel, and example, and carefully discriminated relief; and Chalmers did the same in a parish in Glasgow by the same system, which survived his removal sixteen years. According to this proportion 2500 visitors willing to give two hours a week should do it in Liverpool. In Elberfeld it takes only on an average two hours once a fortnight. Surely out of 500,000,—2500 such righteous men with common sense could be found, and yet it seems to be supposed ridiculous to hope for this. What a comment on our Christianity! Nay, every one assumes that the vanity and love of power of philanthropists and clergymen would almost of itself prove an

insuperable obstacle in the way. I don't believe the latter, or indeed the former, but it wants some one or more men of eloquence and moral power to start and carry on such an experiment, till it has become impressed on Englishmen that part of their "regular duty" is to do such work. Then I think it would be safe; for as Lord D—— said, it is that sense of the imperativeness of "duty" that makes self-government possible here, while its place being filled with egotistical vanity in French statesmen makes things impossible there. I wish I felt that duty was as universal a motive here as D—— thought. I should then have no anxiety for our future. And I hope he exaggerated French vanity, or, alas for poor France!

Don't burn this letter: I should like to talk over some of its visions with you. They come back upon me so repeatedly after every discouraging discussion or fact, as things which should be, and therefore ought and can be, that I hope for clearer outlook as to the *how* coming to me, or still more probably to some one else, while I may live to help, if God will.

BASSENFELL, *August* 20, 1871.

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I feel as if there was a constant danger when occupying so responsible a position, and engaged on such engrossing and responsible work, of a very deceptive and dangerous form of selfishness creeping over one—as if one had a right to all sorts of rest and self-indulgence to keep one up and refresh one after such a strain. And yet (and this is my second thought, and one which comes back and back upon me) it ought to be just the opposite—rest and wholesome food and cheerful exercise one

does require and may richly enjoy, but luxury and self-indulgence will weaken and not strengthen; and certainly those to whom such intellectual and interesting work is given, ought to require no luxury to fill a life so richly filled, and simplicity and frugality of living and constant self-denial and exertion for others should to them at least be an easy task.

When I think of my own share of this life I am oppressed with its richness in blessings and my own weakness and self-indulgence and vanity. . . .

Then, again, if it is difficult to prevent one's wealth doing oneself harm, it is almost as difficult to do good with it—so easy to do harm to others. I am inclined to return to my first love in this respect, the Ministry to the Poor. The best men should be sent there instead of those poor, half-educated Scripture readers, who seem so often to go wrong. If we could have one first-rate missionary such as our first was, with real power of sympathy and influence, at the head, and a number of first-class young men "working out their titles" under him as curates,—by such work I cannot but hope some impression could be made on the mass of unbelief and vice of our large towns.

ELBERFELD, *November* 2, 1871.[1]

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The place seems a very thriving one, with plenty of work, which has saved them so far from some difficulties that lie before them should any long-continued reverse take place. But their system has proved that the one principle under which alone outdoor relief can be successful is the personal contact with the poor of the

[1] See Chap. X., The Poor Law, Charity and Social Reform.

visitors, and the division of labour to such an extent that ordinary busy men can do the work without serious interference with their own labour, and will therefore go on doing it—not a few and for a short time, but a great number and persistently. I am sure the system could be worked in all moderate-sized manufacturing towns. It would be very difficult in Liverpool and London, from the floating population whose work, when they had it, was casual and irregular, and whose earnings and character were therefore difficult to ascertain. But I am convinced that some adaptation of the principle of subdivision of labour and consequent personal influence ought to be applied. Three towns have adopted the system in this neighbourhood—two forced by the results at Elberfeld; and two of the neighbouring towns admit that they must soon adopt it.

To his Mother

18 Princes Gardens, London, S.W.
May 1, 1875.

I do not know what Emily told you of our proceedings here. We had Michel Chevalier to dinner, and Gladstone and Bright, Grant Duff, Trevelyan, and Cox to meet him. We had a very amusing evening, as Gladstone was in great force, and rather an amusing incident took place. Apropos of the extremes of economy, I told the story of old Bullen, who, as you may remember, when Maxwell brought him a corn-doctor to relieve his sufferings, when he was eighty years of age, in great misery, and about to leave three millions of money, with no children to leave it to, would not let his corns be operated upon, because the chiropodist wanted to charge 5s. a corn for fifteen corns. Bullen

said he had so short a time to live that it was not worth while spending so much money on his feet. Bright capped the story—not as to economy, but imposition—by stating that —— wanted to charge a lady, a friend of his, £34 for cutting her corns. He got £10 out of her, but was obliged to disgorge £8 : 10s. of it by a threat of Bow Street. Gladstone capped this by declaring that a Bank Director, a friend of his, was done in the same way out of £380, rather than disclose the fact that so great a being as a Bank Director could have corns at all. But his banker, who suspected the fraud, detained the cheques, got him to apply to a lawyer, who, in his turn, went to an analyst, who discovered that the supposed corns were not corns at all, but pig's-bristles, and compelled repayment of the whole. The funniest thing was that Chevalier, who appears to be able to speak English well enough, thought we were talking about a heavy imposition upon corn, and asked, "Qu'est-ce qu'on dit des lois de blé?"

Chevalier did not give a very hopeful account of French politics. He thinks very ill of both Gambetta and Thiers, who, he says, have made money by politics. He thinks Bismarck has a game which we cannot yet at all see. He is sure that he is too clever a man to believe in his pretended alarms at an attack from the French, who, he says, it is simply impossible should attack him, and that Bismarck knows this; and, therefore, his pretended alarm, he is convinced, is intended to cover some other design—not against France, from whom he could get nothing more than he has already got. He is most suspicious of his having a design against Holland and possibly Antwerp, though he thinks the almost certain war with England, in case he touches the latter, might prevent him. If he does not mean to attack Holland,

he thinks he might have an eye upon the German subjects of Austria. I think some of those present thought it was quite as likely he had lost his temper, feeling that perhaps he had made a mistake in the row he had got into with the Catholics.

CHAPTER VIII

LIVERPOOL POLITICS AND ELECTION CONTESTS—1880

At the by-election following the death of Mr. S. R. Graves in 1873, and again at the General Election of 1874, a great effort was made to capture a second Liverpool seat in the Liberal interest. Mr. W. S. Caine was the candidate in both contests, but the majority of the electors showed themselves, as usual, obstinately Conservative, and he was twice defeated. William Rathbone remained minority member for the borough until the General Election of 1880, when he declined the renomination that was offered him, and allowed himself to be proposed as a candidate for the South-West division of Lancashire. The reasons which led him thus to sever his political connection with his native town, and to abandon a safe seat in order to contest one which was at its best but a forlorn hope, were the ground of more speculation and more misunderstanding than perhaps any other act of his life. The circumstances in which his

decision was taken were, in fact, somewhat complicated, but the motives which determined it were very definite and simple, and at this distance of time the story in its main features may be told without reservation.

Since the defeat of Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Henry Grenfell for South-West Lancashire in 1868, the Liberals of the division had not ventured to make another attack on the constituency, and had left it in the undisturbed possession of the Conservatives through one general election and two by-elections. In 1879, signs began to multiply all over the country that the tide of Liberalism was again upon the flow, and that the days of Lord Beaconsfield's Government were numbered. In South-West Lancashire the Liberal leaders had one special reason for hopefulness in the defection from the Government of the late Lord Derby, who, as one of the two greatest landowners of the division, as well as from his personal eminence, was believed to be very influential with the electorate. On the other hand, they had to remember that Mr. Gladstone's defeat had taken place at a time when his principles were triumphing everywhere else, and that since then the Liberal organisation of the division had been neglected for twelve years. They were determined if possible to contest both seats, but they felt they could only do so with two strong candidates. For

one of these they had fixed upon Captain Molyneux, a brother of Lord Sefton. He was young and without experience in politics, but as a representative of the second great landowning family of the county he might be expected to attract the rural interest. For the other candidate they required an older man, and one if possible who would be acceptable to the town voters of the constituency, who numbered more than half. It occurred to some of the county leaders that William Rathbone, if he could be induced to stand, fulfilled these conditions better than any one else who was available. He already knew the constituency thoroughly, not only from his experience as chairman of Mr. Gladstone's Committee through two elections, but because, as the only Liberal member in the neighbourhood, he had practically been the representative of its Liberal interests during the past eleven years. In asking him to become their candidate, they indeed relied upon the knowledge of his unselfishness and loyalty to the party which they had gained during those years; for it was clear to any one who knew him and the circumstances, that he had nothing to gain, and much to lose, by consenting. His seat for the borough was practically secure, unless and until minority representation should be abolished by Parliament. The county seat, even in the improbable event of his winning

it, was certain to be hotly contested at every election. The work in Liverpool had been hard—as hard, perhaps, as he was likely to find it in any constituency in England. But so far as it was special to the place, it was mainly concerned with interests and problems with which he had a life-long and hereditary familiarity, and at sixty-one, after eleven years in the House, change and novelty had ceased to have any attraction for him. Above all, his affection for his native town was of a peculiarly strong and personal kind. Liverpool was Liverpool, and he felt at the time as though no other constituency could ever be quite the same.

When the leaders of the County Committee first began to make overtures, he admitted this partiality, saying that he both felt bound and preferred to remain in the borough as long as his constituents wished it, but adding that his sole wish was to do whatever was thought best for the party. Encouraged by this saving clause the County Committee continued, severally and together, to press their suggestion upon him. Many of them had their business in Liverpool, and were actively associated with the politics of his own constituency as well as the county. Their proposal was from the first strongly backed by a section of the Liverpool press, and it was evident that the matter was arousing some conflict of opinion among the leaders of the party in the borough. Many of them, including perhaps

a majority of the older men, the moderate Liberals, and the representatives of families long connected with Liverpool, repudiated almost with vehemence the notion of letting him leave them. They urged that while the county might legitimately wish to secure him as their representative, for his own constituents to aid and abet his going was to show a want of appreciation of his services and an ungracious readiness to sever old ties. There was, however, an active section, including several of those most intimately concerned in running the party machine, who took a different view. They argued that as half of the county voters belonged to the borough, the severance from Liverpool would be more nominal than real. They dwelt upon the importance to the whole party of fighting the county seat with a good candidate, and urged the duty of sacrificing personal interests and preferences to this end.

Without in the least impugning the genuineness and possible validity of these arguments, it must be added that, as was well understood at the time, many of those who used them had their eyes all the more open to the force of the county claim, because they were not altogether sorry that it was so likely to be the occasion of causing a vacancy in the minority seat. None of those, one is glad to believe, who shared this feeling, bore the sitting member any personal ill-will.

But it must be recognised that he was not as a politician sufficiently pliable, nor possibly sufficiently showy, to be a representative entirely after the heart of the average local party agent. His work in Parliament had been of the arduous, thorough, very unostentatious kind which we tried to describe in the previous chapter. Its value was perhaps better known to his fellow-members and to the experts in the subjects at which he worked than to all the leaders and wire-pullers in the constituency, although there were some of these in all ranks, and not least among the working men, who appreciated it fully.

But it was his want of pliability in certain ways that was probably his chief defect from the point of view of the party managers. Although fully recognising the obligations of party, and very loyal to his leaders in Parliament, he held a strong view that members of Parliament should be representatives, not delegates, and that while giving full weight to the opinions of constituents, they must in the long-run be free to vote upon their own convictions. Upon this ground he had a rooted objection to giving pledges to vote for or against particular measures or resolutions, unless the issue were very clean cut and very clearly and generally understood. In questions that were at all complicated, the exact bearings and scope of proposed measures could seldom, he argued, be known until

after they had been debated in the House, and members ought not to be debarred from reconsidering their judgment on them by pledges given in the excitement and under the pressure of an election contest. Nor should such pledges be necessary, if there were between a member and his constituency proper relations of mutual understanding, sympathy, and trust.

These views had on one or two occasions during his representation of the borough threatened to bring him into conflict with some sections of his constituents whose enthusiasm for special measures had made it hard for them to concede the freedom he asked for. Thus, as we have already seen, his inability to support Sir Wilfrid Lawson's Permissive Prohibition Bill, and his views on temperance questions generally, had been something of a stumbling-block to the extreme temperance party. At the time of the General Election of 1874 there had been rumours that the "Permissive Bill people" were going to plump[1] for the other candidate, Mr. W. S. Caine. The danger of this, if there ever was any danger, was averted by the loyalty and zeal of Mr. Caine, who showed himself, then as always, one of his warmest admirers and friends.

A few years later a more serious difficulty arose.

[1] *i.e.* to cast only one of their votes. Plumping, in the sense of cumulative voting, was not allowed.

The agitation for Home Rule, which may be said to have begun its active political existence in 1872, had been gathering in strength and improving in organisation all through the rest of the seventies. In Liverpool, owing to the presence in the poorer quarters of the town of a very large Irish Roman Catholic population, questions of Irish policy have always excited feeling on both sides nearly as strong as in any town of Ulster, and while the Nationalist party probably commands more votes than in any other town in England, it has always been the object of greater hostility on the part not only of Conservatives but of old-fashioned Whigs. Antagonisms of race and religion make themselves felt in all their force, and it is perhaps scarcely too much to say that it is the number of Irish in Liverpool that keeps the town as a whole so persistently Conservative, and the number of Roman Catholics that makes its Protestantism so aggressively Protestant.

William Rathbone was far from sharing in or approving this prevalent Orange sentiment. His father had always been especially identified with Irish interests by his advocacy of the removal of all Catholic disabilities, his labours in organising and distributing relief at the time of the famine, his friendship with Father Mathew, and most of all perhaps, in the popular mind, by his once taking the chair at a public dinner in Liverpool to

Daniel O'Connell, then one of the most dreaded and hated men in the United Kingdom.[1]

He himself thoroughly approved his father's views on the subject, and he had, besides, a strong instinctive liking and admiration for the Irish type of character, which was in several points—its idealism, its tinge of romance, its love of education —more naturally congenial to him than that of his own countrymen. But upon the question of the restoration of an Irish Parliament he at that time shared the view, or as one might perhaps more truly call it the assumption, of the great majority of the Liberal party, including all its responsible leaders, that such a demand was impracticable and dangerous. On several occasions he had voted in accordance with this conviction, and in April 1877 the Secretaries of the recently formed Home Rule Association opened fire upon him in a letter, of which the following were the important passages :

The Association represents some ten to eleven thousand parliamentary votes, and is extending its organisation, with the determination of procuring a voting power proportionate to the Irish population of the town. . . .

We are aware that in the past you have most liberally

[1] It is related of this elder William Rathbone that coming home one twelfth of July from the Town Council, seething with indignation at the bigotry and bad taste of some anti-Irish manifestations there, he went to stroll in his garden, and finding it ablaze with orange lilies, ordered them all to be pulled up and burnt.

supported questions affecting the religious and social conditions of the Irish people in England; and we therefore more readily appeal to you to give your earnest consideration to the great question of Home Rule. We beg of you to give an answer to the following questions, assuring you that upon your answer will depend our support of you and the Liberal party, which you represent, or our entire severance from its ranks:

1. Will you support and vote for Mr. Butt's motion for inquiry into the relations between Ireland and England since the passing of the Act of Union?

2. Will you vote for the release of the political (Irish) prisoners?

The threat contained in this letter dispersed its recipient's wonted urbanity, and drew from him a reply very characteristic of his conception of the proper relation between a member and his constituents. His answer, after recapitulating the chief points of his correspondent's letter, continues:

In reply, I must say that I had flattered myself my antecedents would have protected me from a letter all the arguments in which are addressed rather to my fears than to my sense of justice and reason, and which proceeds on the assumption that I shall regulate my votes in the House of Commons with reference rather to the security of my seat than to the nature of my convictions. I must say plainly in reply, that, while I value highly the support of my Irish fellow-townsmen, not only because I appreciate their numerical power, but far more because their support is associated in my mind with the many struggles in which I have been united with them in the

cause of civil and religious liberty, I feel that, should the time unhappily ever come when they can no longer support me consistently with what they consider to be the interests of the country, it would be as unreasonable for me to expect their votes as it would be dishonourable in them to record them for me.

In answer to your first question, I will now say that I was not able conscientiously to support the resolution you refer to (originally moved by Mr. Butt, but on Tuesday evening by Mr. Shaw). I should warmly advocate an inquiry into the causes of discontent among a large number of our Irish fellow-countrymen, and I hold strongly that many local Irish questions might with advantage be locally settled. The words of the motion did not, however, simply seek general inquiry, but were so arranged as to be open to the construction that the object of it was to investigate the expediency of establishing a separate parliament for Ireland in the ordinary and wide sense of that term. Believing such a proposal to be impracticable, and yet that my vote might be understood to mean that I might be prepared to support it, I voted against the motion.

As regards the second question, I am in favour of the release of the political prisoners to which it refers, unless you include in these those concerned in the Clerkenwell explosion. That crime was planned with such a reckless and wicked disregard for the lives of innocent persons that I am not prepared to interfere in any way, even by petition, with the course which the executive may choose to follow with regard to it. With that exception I think that in the case of the political prisoners still remaining in prison the law has now been sufficiently vindicated in regard to the events they were connected with, and on

grounds of public policy it is desirable to obliterate, as soon as it can be accomplished with safety, all traces of disaffection and discontent, and to banish the bitter feelings they tend to keep alive.

In June he received a letter from the Northern Branch of the Association, imperiously calling on him to both speak and vote for the release of the political prisoners, and adding :

Should you not deem it expedient to reply before next Saturday, the 23rd June, I shall consider myself at liberty to make whatever public use of this letter the branch may authorise me to do, and shall take it for granted that you are opposed to the release of *any* of the political prisoners, simply because you consider that they have not suffered long enough, nor have they been as harshly dealt with as you would wish in British dungeons—or if you prefer it, English bastilles.

He replied curtly :

With respect to my opinion as to the political prisoners, I must refer you to my letter of the 28th April in reply to one from the Secretaries of the Liverpool Home Rule Association, to which I have nothing to add. Its perusal will show you that the course you suggest that you are at liberty to take would be neither fair nor honest ; and I cannot suppose, therefore, that any association of my fellow-townsmen would adopt it.

Shortly afterwards both the Home Rule Association and its Northern Branch wrote to inform the newspapers that it had been decided

at meetings of their members not to support the candidature of Mr. William Rathbone, M.P., at the next election.

As the Irish vote was estimated at from 9000 to 11,000 strong, the definite loss of their support was of considerable importance, although it had not, in fact, for some time been given heartily to Liberal candidates, either at parliamentary or municipal elections. The priests, whose political influence was very powerful, had been alienated by the line taken by the Liberals upon the question of School Boards and religious education.

At the municipal elections of 1879 the Liberal organisers, with a general election looming ahead of them, roused themselves for a special effort. The party machinery had been recently recast, three separate Liberal associations having been welded together into one representative body, known as the Nine Hundred. The leaders of this organisation managed somehow to come to terms with the Irish party. To quote the letter of a lively contemporary observer, they "squared the Papist, and sprang the mine of a united Liberalism upon the Capuan Tory, fast asleep." The result was such a series of victories as had not been known for years—no less than eleven wards returning Liberals to the Council. The triumph of the party was destined to be very short-lived, and perhaps in the long-run it rather did the Con-

servatives a service than otherwise, by teaching them their lesson in good time before the parliamentary elections. But for the time it raised in the local leaders of the Liberals great hopes of what might be accomplished if the understanding which had apparently brought about such a result could be maintained. In the way of this possibility, William Rathbone's disagreement with the Nationalists was undoubtedly a great obstacle.

In the following January, while the question of the candidature in South-West Lancashire was still under discussion, Liverpool found itself unexpectedly plunged into a by-election by the death of Mr. Torr, one of its two Conservative members. The Conservatives put forward a strong local candidate in Mr. Edward Whitley. The Liberals had some time before, in view of the General Election, selected as their second candidate the eldest son of the Earl of Dalhousie, Lord Ramsay, who, as a convert to Liberalism from a Conservative family of governing tradition, was much sought after by constituencies in search of candidates of promise. He had been brought up in the Navy, and after distinguishing himself as the youngest commander in the fleet, had left it when his father, by the death of several relatives, unexpectedly inherited the earldom. Since then he had acquired Liberal convictions at Balliol, and had succeeded in retaining them while holding an

appointment at Court. Although he had had no opportunity of nursing the constituency before the by-election, it was plain from his first appearance in Liverpool that he was going to be a very popular candidate. Besides possessing the pleasant and genial qualities which might be expected from one of his age, profession, rank, and previous career, he proved a clear and effective speaker, an energetic worker, and an apt pupil in the art of contesting an election in the unfamiliar conditions of a great provincial town. At the end of the campaign it was said by observers well able to judge, that he had made only one blunder. Unfortunately it was a serious one. The Irish party had, of course, brought pressure to bear upon him, as they had done upon William Rathbone, to support Mr. Butt's motion. In his early speeches he had promised to vote for an inquiry into "the nature and extent of the Irish demand for self-government," but had expressly safeguarded the integrity of the United Kingdom, and disapproved any attempt to restore the old Irish Parliament. This did not satisfy the Nationalists, who issued a manifesto refusing to support his candidature. Negotiations followed, in which the Irish leaders showed some ingenuity in veiling the real issue in a mist of words, and in the very middle of a meeting called to denounce Lord Ramsay's candidature, they were able to

announce that the differences between them were adjusted and that he had conceded all they asked for.

A candidate new to politics has to make up opinions as he goes along upon half the questions he is expected to speak on with authority, and he is naturally susceptible to argument and influence. No one who knew him doubted Lord Ramsay's sincerity, but his concession was certainly ill-timed. Coming when it did, it gave the enemy legitimate occasion to accuse him of truckling to threats, and it is fair to say that he realised his mistake as soon as the concession had been made. It had indirectly an unfortunate bearing upon the prospects of the Liberal party in the borough and upon his relations to the minority member, William Rathbone—the senior candidate, as the understanding then went, in the General Election. If there were to be any hope of gaining a second Liberal seat it was essential that the whole party should hang together, and that there should be no plumping. The candidates and their immediate friends would still, no doubt, do everything possible to secure this result. But when once the junior candidate had conceded what the senior had refused, it became clear that it would be very difficult to prevent the contest from degenerating into a contest between the two Liberals for the minority seat, in which the issue would depend largely on whether the

concession to the Home Rulers had secured more votes than it had alienated, or alienated more than it secured.

While the by-election was still in progress, there were a good many who prophesied that such a contest would end in William Rathbone's defeat. It was an open secret that there were some beside the Home Rulers who would not have been sorry if it had been so, and who, if they could not have both, preferred Lord Ramsay as their representative for one or a combination of a number of reasons such as probably enter, in greater or slighter degree, into most election contests. He was young and plastic, and might be expected to be more amenable to influence than a more experienced politician. The prospect of his accession to the Upper House, which could not in the course of nature be delayed many years, would keep up that stir in party waters which political organisers think healthy. His youth, rank, and abilities gave hope that he might reach high office and so confer distinction on the town which had introduced him into politics. His personal qualities and those of his wife brought into the sober atmosphere of local politics a waft from a livelier and brighter climate, and serious-minded local politicians showed signs of the exhilarating effects.

No man in Liverpool was less likely than the minority member to exaggerate the prevalence of

these motives, and no one could be more sympathetic with the two latter of them. Always a great believer in youth, and also in the special opportunities for usefulness which, under the conditions of English society, high position gives to any one capable of using them, he caught much of the prevailing infection, and threw himself with an unmistakably whole-hearted zeal into the cause of the young candidate whom nearly every one in Liverpool except himself was beginning to look upon as something like his rival. At one meeting of electors he dwelt with pride upon all the incidents of Lord Ramsay's career,—his success in the Navy, his studies at Balliol, his carefully formed Liberal convictions, and the sense of responsibility for his position and gifts which underlay them,—and then told the audience that when he had first heard of these things from the Liberal agent, he had said to him: "If Lord Ramsay is all that you say, he is a just perfect candidate for Liverpool." Another meeting was assured by him that the then House of Commons was the oldest, richest, and most inefficient that had sat in his day, and that while it had any quantity of age and experience, it was lamentably deficient in youth and energy. He went on to describe the need of the Liberal party for young men of ability, capable of being trained up as the great statesmen of the future,

and after enlarging upon the exceptional advantages which the varied interests of Liverpool gave it as a training-ground for these young statesmen, he finished by exhorting his hearers, if they wished to do honour to themselves and service to their country, "to send to Parliament a young, vigorous, determined, honest man like Lord Ramsay, and not another old gentleman, however respectable he may be."

Speakers on a candidate's platform are bound to find reasons why he is a better man than his opponent, but it would have been quite easy to have kept to general political ground. Under the special circumstances of the case, these particular reasons had a significance which was quickly appreciated by the rank and file of the electors, among whom the speaker's popularity was great, and who would have been quick to note any indication that he felt himself aggrieved.

Unfortunately for the Liberals, the other side too had a popular candidate and strong supporters. The event showed that however it might be with the rest of the country, the majority in Liverpool at least was as Conservative as ever it had been. Mr. Whitley was elected by 2200 votes upon a poll of 50,000.

This Liberal reverse, coming close upon another at Southwark, was thought by some to have precipitated the intention of the Conservative Govern-

ment to dissolve Parliament. They took it, it was said, as a sign that the Opposition had fallen into disfavour with the country by coquetting with the Home Rulers. However that may be, after they had set out on the work of the session with every appearance of an intention to carry it through, the dissolution was on April 7 suddenly announced, and Lord Beaconsfield, in a letter to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland which was in effect an election manifesto, tried to make the integrity of the United Kingdom the issue of the election.

The mere fact of defeat in a town so steadily Conservative as Liverpool, was not in reality of much significance; but that the Conservative majority should have suffered scarcely any reduction in its proportion to the poll since Liberal fortunes were at the very low ebb of 1873,—this seemed a bad omen, and it was very generally attributed to Lord Ramsay's concession to the Home Rulers. This explanation received confirmation by three defeats occurring in quick succession at by-elections in municipal wards. It seemed as though the electors, as soon as they realised that the November victories had been won by the united action of Liberals and Nationalists, were eager to disavow the alliance. As the matter was put by the lively correspondent whose letter we quoted before :

Hughes of Everton, as Hughes, beat Vining by 15. Hughes, Home Rule candidate, *after Everton knew it*, was beaten by 1500. Matheson, 100 better than Evans, is beaten by 170 more than Evans, when South Toxteth knew he was the Radical *and* Home Rule candidate.

From these and other facts this keen observer concludes "that the Tories when roused are a true majority," and that "if Liverpool had been less excited by Lady Ramsay's beauty, by Lord Ramsay's ability, and by your ridiculous loyalty, we should have been beaten by 3500, instead of 2200," and goes on to prophesy that when Liverpool had had time to think, she would repudiate those who had bowed the knee to Baal by 5000 instead of 2200 votes.

Whatever might be the value of this estimate, it was pretty clear that Lord Ramsay's concession had alienated more votes than it conciliated—a conclusion not of course in itself any condemnation of his action. All hope of gaining a second Liberal seat for the borough was now dispelled, and it became clear that if Lord Ramsay was to begin his political career as a member for Liverpool, it would have to be in the place, and not as the colleague, of the member in possession.

Meantime the negotiations with the representatives of the county were still going on. William Rathbone regarded the questions of the representation of the county and the representation of the

borough as quite distinct, and he was determined that they should be kept so. In a private letter to the leaders of the Liberal party in Liverpool, written shortly after Lord Ramsay's defeat, he told them that in discussing the representation of the borough he hoped they would consider the question of his personal position as of absolutely no importance; but that should they come to the conclusion that they had found a man who could represent them more truly or more efficiently than he had done, they must not expect him to fight the county merely to save them from the unpleasantness of saying so plainly.

There were some of his friends who feared that his humility would lead him too hastily to infer that the conclusion he spoke of had been reached. Thus the correspondent whom we have quoted so often, wrote to him in terms in which irritation at his impracticability evidently struggles with affectionate pride:

One thing is clear: that you should keep your powder dry and say and do nothing to compromise the position. So too in your ridiculous self-abnegation and exaggerated loyalty, do not forget this: a public man does not belong to himself alone; nor has he any right, in his morbid desire to do right in his *own* sight, to sacrifice the equally sacred rights of those whom he represents. If, as it well may be, you exactly represent some 14,000 earnest, zealous Liberals, here, you have no right to *sell* them to any other man, because in an unfair

estimate of yourself, or in a fit of romantic folly, you imagine that some younger and more popular person would more exactly represent them. In all this you must think of others rather than of yourself, and even be —which will be hard to you—selfish for yourself, if it be best for them. These are general remarks.

Probably this caution was not actually necessary. Anxious as William Rathbone might be to see Lord Ramsay in Parliament, he could not be ignorant that his entry there did not depend on Liverpool. He knew the weak points of his own position well; but he had held the position too long not to know its strong points also; and however modest, he was neither timid nor excessively thin-skinned. The question of the South-West Lancashire election was the one upon which his eyes were mainly fixed, and it was upon that that his final decision was based. The importance of recovering the seat was obvious, and there was a very general agreement that he was the most likely candidate to do it. Had he felt confident or even hopeful about the result of the contest he would not have felt free to hesitate any longer. But he had always, from his early thorough knowledge of the constituency, taken a much less sanguine view than most of his advisers; and since the contest in Liverpool had stirred up the anti-Irish feeling of the constituency, he felt more hopeless than ever. Defeat might be risked, but an overwhelming

defeat would, he thought, do much more harm than good.

The more hopeful view of some of the local men was, however, backed up by Mr. Adam, the chief Liberal Whip. Lord Sefton also was eager for the contest, but would not sanction his brother's standing unless William Rathbone or some other experienced politician stood with him.

In the face of these opinions, William Rathbone was unwilling to take the responsibility of deciding in accordance with his own forebodings. He resolved to refer the matter to the two responsible leaders of the party, Lord Granville and Lord Hartington. He sought out Lord Hartington, who, as member for a Lancashire constituency, knew the circumstances of the county well, and asked him whether he thought it would be to the advantage of the party to contest South-West Lancashire against Mr. Cross, with the strong probability of a defeat. Lord Hartington seemed reluctant to give an opinion, and turned away, saying shortly, "You ought not to have been asked." William Rathbone told him that was no answer to his question. He had asked him whether his standing would be to the interests of the party, and that, Lord Hartington must agree, was the only point that he or those on the spot had a right to consider. Thus pressed, he admitted that if those on the spot were certain

that they could make a good fight, it would be well worth while to make the attempt. The same question put to Lord Granville drew out substantially the same reply.

On March 17 a meeting of the Liberal Nine Hundred was held in Liverpool, at which two resolutions were passed. The first, "gratefully recognising the long and eminent services of Mr. Rathbone in Parliament," requested him to allow himself to be nominated for the borough. The second, in somewhat lengthy and involved terms, significant of the doubts and difficulties of which it was the outcome, after declaring the meeting's "profound conviction of the importance of Mr. Rathbone's continued connection with Liverpool in the coming Parliament," signified its willingness to accept the decision of the leaders of the Liberal party.[1]

These resolutions were at once telegraphed to William Rathbone in London. They were preceded and followed by a shower of telegrams and letters from prominent Liverpool Liberals urging him not to leave the borough. But by this time he had practically made up his mind. He made one condition : that Lord Derby should come out openly on the Liberal side and give Captain Molyneux and himself his support. This he found Lord Derby was quite prepared to do, and on

[1] *i.e.* of Lord Hartington and Lord Granville.

March 15 he addressed to his friend, Mr. R. D. Holt, then chairman of the Liberal party in Liverpool, a letter announcing his intention to accept the invitation of the county. He began by reciting the facts of the negotiations with the County Committee as I have given them above. He described the overtures made him in the autumn by the County Association, and his first rejection of them upon the plea that he felt bound and preferred to remain in his old constituency. He spoke of the further pressure put upon him on the ground of his former acquaintance with the constituency and of the opinion expressed to him by Lord Granville and Lord Hartington as to the importance of contesting the county seat, and concluded:

Under these circumstances I have decided to accept the joint nomination of the County Committee, and I trust I shall have the approval of every true Liberal in the course which I have felt it my duty to take.

In thus severing my direct connection with the borough, I am glad to know that if I am elected it will still form the largest part of my constituency, and I need not assure my many friends in Liverpool that I shall continue to attend to their municipal and commercial interests, with which my family have been so closely identified for generations. It is also a satisfaction to me to know that Lord Ramsay will be one of the candidates for the borough, as I feel convinced that in him Liverpool will find a most able and popular representative.

I am deeply grateful to my fellow-townsmen for the

constant confidence and kindness which I have experienced at their hands, and I shall endeavour later to express this to them directly and more satisfactorily than I can within the limits of this letter. I will only say now that I hope any of my friends who may be disposed to blame me for giving up that which has always been the greatest object of my ambition—the representation of my native town—will consider the circumstances in which my decision was taken. The Liberal party, both in the town and in the county, were decided that South-West Lancashire ought to be fought, and could be won, and I was told off by the Liberal leaders as one who ought to fight it. This being the case, I am sure my friends will agree with me that I could not hesitate for one moment to leave my position of safety to take up the duty thus offered to me.

To you personally I am indebted for the consideration and friendship you have always shown me, alike in our private and official relations.

Lord Ramsay was then nominated, and neither party in the borough having a mind for another contest, he was returned with Lord Sandon and Mr. Whitley unopposed. Lord Ramsay had been full of scruples at the notion of stepping into another man's seat, and had frequently come to the house in Princes Gardens to discuss the matter with William Rathbone, who made light of his doubts, telling him that they were both privates in an army, and must go where they were bid. At the least encouragement from the older man, he would have telegraphed to accept one of the other nominations that had been offered to him. When

the inevitable defeat in South-West Lancashire came, he took it far more to heart than the defeated candidate, who promptly wrote him "two kind letters," of which Lord Ramsay says, "they are very like yourself, and as cheering as anything can be under the circumstances."

Relieved that the time of indecision and anxiety was over, William Rathbone threw himself into the campaign with even more than his usual energy. It began with a meeting at Southport, and in the ensuing fortnight he made not less than forty speeches, many of them in the open air. Nearly all the meetings were in suburbs and outlying towns within a few miles from Liverpool. Most of them were marked by great enthusiasm, much of it evidently personal to himself. The sacrifice he had made to his party, and still more perhaps what was visible of the spirit in which it had been made, had gone home to the rank and file of Liberal electors, and they showed their feeling with Lancashire heartiness. The Tory press did its best to discount his popularity by discrediting his own account of his candidature, and by representing him as forcibly turned out of Liverpool to please the Home Rulers, and as disingenuously making a virtue out of his necessity. To all questions and comments on the subject he replied by repeating in brief the facts he had dwelt on in his letter to Mr. Holt, and to one such explanation

he added : "That is the whole truth, and I fancy there is not one single man in Liverpool, whether he be opponent or supporter, who will doubt my word."

The ingenious London correspondent of one paper professed to discover that he had been promised a baronetcy if defeated, and urged his friends not to deprive him of the honour by giving him their votes. He retorted by telling the story of Coke of Norfolk. Coke was so troublesome in presenting petitions in favour of Liberal reform to the King, that His Majesty, who had been very intimate with him in his irresponsible days before the Regency, at length said : "Confound you, Coke ! if you ever present one of those petitions again, by Heaven ! I'll knight you." The old gentleman never appeared at Court with a petition again. "I can only say," he went on, "that if Lord Hartington had held out any such threat as a baronetcy to me, the effect would have been much the same. I feel strongly that an English merchant may well be so proud of his order that he need not seek higher distinction, unless indeed it be the honour which I have enjoyed, and which I again seek at your hands, of being one of its representatives in Parliament. Gentlemen, whatever may be my lot in this present contest, you may be assured of one thing—I shall die, as I have lived, bearing the simple name by which the head of

my family has been known in Lancashire for generations."

The largest meeting of all was among his old constituents, in the familiar surroundings of Hengler's Circus. He had a great reception, and he closed his speech with the words :

My voice is failing me, but I should like you to hear my last words, and they shall be very few and brief. We shall not meet again until South-West Lancashire has delivered its important verdict. I shall accept that verdict cheerfully, and so will my friend Captain Molyneux, whatever the verdict may be. The ties which bind me to my native town and my native county cannot be severed. They have been gathering strength during a long lifetime of active work among you for forty years, ten of them as your representative. Every year of that long period has been full of fresh obligation to my native town. Every year has made me feel deeper and deeper gratitude and affection, as fervent as it is possible for any man to feel. In some capacity, be it proud or be it humble, I must serve you, and I will serve you whilst life and strength remain. It is for you, my fellow-townsmen and my neighbours and friends in the county, to say whether I shall be enabled to continue to serve you in the proud capacity of your representative.

The feelings with which he looked back at the events of the past two weeks were shown by a letter which he wrote to his cousin, Mr. George Melly, on the night before the poll. Mr. Melly, on whose keen instinct in political

matters he placed much reliance, had, after some hesitation, finally advised his going to the county :

I do hope you will sleep peacefully to-night—I am sure you ought to ; for you must be satisfied now, if you ever doubted, that you and Sam [1] never did an act of truer or wiser friendship in the many you have done than when you advised me to accept the proposal that I should go to South-West Lancashire. Nothing that can happen to-morrow can change this ; everything that has happened since has confirmed the wisdom of the decision. I could never have held up my head again had I walked over for Liverpool, and South-West Lancashire not been fought. I should have been a disgraced man in my own eyes and the eyes of those whose opinion I value—you, Sam, and others, and most of all Emily,[2] who has not had a doubt. And now suppose even a severe defeat : why, I have had such kindness, such friendship, I may almost say attachment, shown to me, and more still to my father's memory, it would repay fifty elections or fifty defeats, or a lifetime of effort and self-sacrifice. I really cannot understand why I should be so overpowered with that love and friendship which outweigh all other earthly blessings.

And do not, my dear George, suppose I am so dense or forgetful as to be unaware how much I owe of my parliamentary career, and indeed that I ever was in Parliament at all, to your too partial overestimate of me which your blind affection has formed and bitten other people with. I know and feel it all, and have neither forgotten nor ever can forget it.

[1] S. G. Rathbone, W. R.'s brother. [2] His wife.

The campaign had seemed to be going so well, that even those who, like William Rathbone himself, had had very little real hope of success, began to believe that he at least would be returned. "The whole tide seemed so completely in our favour," he said, in writing of it afterwards, "that the Conservatives themselves thought we had won; so much so that one of them said to a friend of mine when the poll was closed: 'We should not have minded Mr. Rathbone getting in; but to lose Mr. Cross would be a great blow to us,'—believing that both Liberal candidates were in." But farmers who had voted Tory for generations were not ready to swing round in a moment, even when their landlords set the lead. Lord Derby and Lord Sefton had given their hearty support to the Liberal candidates, but they had rightly brought no pressure to bear, and it was not for Liberals to complain if the result showed that the influence of the great landowners had been over-rated.

William Rathbone and his colleague got no support from the Irish vote, while they bore the penalty of the anti-Irish feeling of the constituency. The Catholics, in spite of the energetic efforts of Lord Ripon to give them a right lead, could not forgive Mr. Gladstone or his followers for the pamphlet on the Vatican decrees. When the poll was announced the figures stood :—

Cross	11,420
Blackburne . . .	10,905
Rathbone	9666
Molyneux . . .	9207

William Rathbone was thus defeated by over 1200 votes. In the course of a short speech which he made to his supporters from the windows of the Reform Club, he told them that he had never felt happier in his life, because, though he and his colleague had been defeated, the principles for which they had been contending were everywhere successful. He had a more personal cause for happiness in the certainty that, under difficult circumstances, he had taken the right course. The swing in favour of the Liberals at that election had been so great, that, had he refused to stand, he felt that every one would have believed that nothing but his selfishness had prevented the seat from being won. Now he was free to work for the object which for the time he was most eager about—the founding of the University College in Liverpool. He scarcely, in fact, seemed to need, in the first excitement at least, the condolences which poured in upon him from every quarter, including most of the prominent men on his own side of the House. He had rather to set himself to cheer up the friends and party leaders who had urged him to stand, and who were now many of them bitterly disappointed and not a little mortified by a defeat

severer than they had thought possible. They had not, he pointed out, done nothing. They had pulled together the party in South-West Lancashire in a way which "made future victory certain." Unfortunately, this prophecy was not fated to be realised. Before the next election the Redistribution Bill had recast all divisions and altered them beyond recognition. But all the constituencies which cover what was then South-West Lancashire now return Conservatives and have done so ever since, usually without a contest. After the disruption of 1886, Liberal Committees might well think it hopeless to attack strongholds which had repelled them so decisively in their hour of triumph.

Two months after the General Election another blow fell upon the Liberals of Liverpool. The Earl of Dalhousie died rather suddenly, at the age of seventy-four, and Lord Ramsay passed into the Upper House. The possibility must have been weighed, but it was an irony of fate that it should have come to pass so soon. At by-elections in three-cornered constituencies the minority clause of course ceased to operate. There being but one vacancy and each elector having one vote, the party in a majority could control the seat. The Liberal press tried to argue that the Tories, who shortly before had been disposed to represent William Rathbone, as he said himself, as "a sort of dis-

carded archangel, whose virtues his own party had been unworthy to appreciate," could now do no less than allow him peaceably to return to his old seat. But it is one thing to praise a political opponent, when by doing so you at once gratify your kindly feelings and convey a rebuke to the other side. It is quite another to let him walk over into a seat which it is in your power to secure for one of your own men. The Tories were scarcely to blame if they refused to see the obligation, especially as the Liberals had set them no such example of magnanimity in the case of by-elections in other three-cornered constituencies. Lord Claud Hamilton was put forward as the Conservative candidate. The Liberals pressed the nomination on William Rathbone, but he did not believe that he could carry the seat, and with the Irish and other extreme elements on his own side still against him, he was not willing to make the attempt. They eventually secured a candidate in Mr. Plimsoll, the champion of the merchant seamen, who would, it was thought, attract the seafaring vote. He was beaten, but by a smaller majority than was expected ; probably because the Conservatives were over-confident and did not put forth their full strength. Two years later, in 1882, there was another by-election upon the elevation of Lord Sandon to the peerage. The Liberals tried again, and to the general surprise

their candidate, Mr. Samuel Smith, was elected. The Redistribution Act of 1885 divided the city into nine parliamentary divisions. Eight of these are held by Conservatives and one by an Irish Home Ruler, and, except for a short time in the Exchange Division, no English Liberal has since sat for any part of Liverpool.

His defeat in South-West Lancashire was followed by a respite of nine months in William Rathbone's political activity.

Vacancies at Leeds, Chester, and the Denbigh Boroughs were all talked of for him, but all for one reason or another fell through. Still, the party Whips were pledged to find him a safe seat at an early opportunity, and he was not sorry for a session's holiday. He spent a good deal of it in collecting funds for the projected University College, and had secured, in sums of £1000 and upwards, endowments of £10,000 apiece for six chairs, before going abroad for his summer holiday.

This holiday was one of the longest he ever took. Accompanied by his wife and two children, a boy and girl of twelve and fourteen, he went for some weeks to the Tyrol. Then, having dispatched the boy home to school, they took steamer at Trieste and went through the Greek Islands and crossed the Isthmus to Athens. There they were joined by Mr. James Bryce, who went with them on a tour through Central Greece. They took

steamer to Nauplia and thence rode to Corinth; then took steamer down the Gulf to Salona, and rode by Delphi and Thebes back to Athens, stopping at many places on the way. Greece was then very little visited by travellers, and the two or three hotels were very rough and dirty. In most places they slept in the houses of the principal inhabitants, at Delphi in the Museum, and at Nemea in a barn. The food consisted of turkeys, very lean and tough, some bread, and wine strongly flavoured with turpentine. As English and as followers of Mr. Gladstone they were everywhere received with hospitality and great attention, and the Government insisted on providing them, much against their wills, with an escort of soldiers to protect them from brigands.

From Greece they went to Cannes, where they had taken a villa for the winter. They had been there only four days when William Rathbone was summoned back to England by a telegram conveying a unanimous invitation from the Liberals of Carnarvonshire to contest the vacancy left by the elevation of Mr. Watkin Williams to the Bench. As Mr. Williams had been returned in April by 1100 votes, the seat was considered secure.

The circumstances of the campaign must have offered a strong contrast to those of the last which William Rathbone had fought. Instead of flat, green fields, sprinkled so thickly with factory

towns and ports that the space between seems all suburbs, and there is scarcely room for a strip of clear sky between one smoke-cloud and another, the new scene lay among the mountains and along the seashore. The large meetings were in pretty watering-places, the smaller—and they were many—in the Nonconformist chapels and school-rooms of villages among the hills. At these meetings three-fourths of the population seemed to attend—farmers and quarrymen with their wives and children—all listening in breathless silence to speeches in what was to not a few of them an unknown tongue, and then breaking out into eager responsiveness when the minister or schoolmaster repeated what had been said, bit by bit, in Welsh. The people were keen politicians of a robust Liberal faith, very strong on disestablishment, education, and temperance. Apart from political argument, William Rathbone's opponents relied much upon two charges: that he was not a Welshman, and that he was a man of no religion. Upon the first count he pleaded that he was at least a citizen, and had been for eleven years the representative of a city containing more Welshmen than any constituency in Wales, so that he might be supposed to know something of the nation. To the second charge he replied briefly once, and then left it alone:

I value the Bible and the Christian religion which it

reveals as the most precious treasure of mankind. I have been brought up to look to it as the rule for my conduct in life, and my consolation in sorrow and death ; and I revere it too much to drag its doctrines into election contests.

The conclusion was foregone from the first, though a Liverpool Liberal is too schooled to defeat to let himself be confident easily. He had a majority of 1029 votes.

In looking back at the events described in this chapter, his friends used sometimes to wonder whether the change of constituency had been in the long-run to the advantage or disadvantage of his usefulness. It was, of course, an idle speculation, like all attempts to measure what is, against what might have been. There seemed some waste of effort, and of natural and acquired fitness, in splitting up his interests between his native town and a strange place. Yet undoubtedly the change had certain points of advantage. The work connected with the special interests of the locality was much less hard. He had a freer hand, and his words and acts had no longer to be weighed and measured and pared down to please half-a-dozen cautious friends and critics, who feared lest this might offend the Roman Catholics, or that be too much for the Whigs. The temperament of his new constituents was, in many ways, peculiarly congenial to him. He delighted in their vigorous

Nonconformity, their frugal and temperate ways, their zeal for education and readiness to make sacrifices to secure it for their children ; in their warmth and demonstrativeness, their voluble and pleasant tongues. It would have been difficult to persuade him that he could have found, even in Liverpool, any work within his power that would have been better worth doing, than securing a thorough system of intermediate and higher education for a people so eager and able to profit by it.

From a selfish point of view, his labours in South-West Lancashire had not been fruitless. The circumstances of the contest, Mr. Gladstone's and Lord Derby's connection with the constituency, and not least his own sacrifice of his Liverpool seat, had attracted much interest and sympathy, and when he returned to the House after a session's absence, he found himself, although representing a less important constituency, in a position which gave him greater influence than before.

Upon a few of the friends and fellow-citizens who knew all the circumstances, the affair seems to have produced a deeper impression. As they watched his bearing while he passed through the tangle of negotiations which we have tried to describe,—without suffering himself to glance for an instant at any other consideration than the public good, without carrying away a bitter feeling about

any one, or once imputing an unworthy motive,—they realised what it meant to apply the principles of Christianity in all simplicity to the affairs of an election contest, and felt that, as one of them expressed it, it would be thenceforward harder for them ever, either by persuasion of others or deception of themselves, to choose a pusillanimous or self-seeking course in public affairs.

CHAPTER IX

WORK FOR EDUCATION

At the declaration of the poll after the South-West Lancashire election described in the last chapter, William Rathbone's reception of the figures was characteristic. For a moment his face clouded, then turning to Mr. W. S. Caine, who stood near him, he said, "*Now* we'll have the College."

The movement for establishing a University College in Liverpool was just then at a critical stage. It had been set on foot some two and a half years before by a group of men, most of whom were connected with one or other of the learned professions. The desire for such a College was of much older date. For many years past the lack of facilities in Liverpool for advanced study in all subjects, but especially in science, had often been discussed among the more ambitious and enlightened citizens, and more than one abortive attempt had been made to supply the

need. The institution known as Queen's College had been established with this aim, on the basis of the old Mechanics Institute, and had conducted for many years evening classes of the character of University Extension lectures; but it had never flourished and was an almost acknowledged failure, mainly, no doubt, because it had no endowment. Its Council, influenced by the prevalent individualism of the time, seem to have thought that education, like other commodities, only needed an open market, and attempted to make the instruction they offered self-supporting.

In 1870 a serious effort was made to establish a College of Science, and some preliminary steps were taken. But there were differences of opinion between the promoters as to the kind and scope of College that was needed. Some thought that trade was not good enough just then to make it possible to secure adequate endowments. Others, from whom support might have been expected, doubted whether there was in Liverpool enough interest in high scientific teaching to justify the attempt, and feared that, even if established, the College, left without sufficient students or funds, would never really thrive. An eminent man of science in Manchester, when consulted on the scheme, replied with a deluge of cold water. In his own town, he pointed out, they were in the midst of a population applying scientific principles

to manufacture, and as compared with Liverpool, the more general interest in scientific study was shown by the much larger proportion of successes at the Science and Art examinations, as well as by the city's longer roll of eminent scientific names. Yet even there the Owens College had had to work for twelve years "without either encouragement from the inhabitants or increase in our numbers." In Liverpool he anticipated a much more uphill struggle. In fact it was evident that Liverpool was, in his view, hopelessly unscientific and likely to remain so. The enthusiasm of the promoters was not sufficient to overbear all these objections, and for the time the proposal was dropped.

In 1876 some alterations in the requirements of the University of London for their medical degrees obliged the Council of the Liverpool School of Medicine to consider afresh the need for greater facilities for scientific study. The result, in the winter of 1877-78, was a joint Committee, representing the Council of the Medical School and the Association for the Promotion of Higher Education, which met under the presidency of the Rev. Charles Beard,[1] and formulated its own preliminary proposals for the foundation of a University College.

[1] The other members were: the Rev. J. Sephton, the Rev. W. Cunningham, Dr. Carter, Dr. Mitchell Banks, Dr. Caton, Dr. Campbell Brown, Mr. Christopher Bushell, Mr. A. Billson, and Mr. J. W. Davidson.

In the meantime the idea was being actively canvassed in the town among men of very various opinions and interests. It soon became evident that it had taken very strong hold, and it was finally resolved to call a Town's Meeting. This meeting, held on the 24th May 1878, was marked by real enthusiasm. Even speakers not usually noted for oratorical power rose to the level of their theme. One of the principal resolutions was moved by one of the most eloquent men whom Liverpool ever adopted as a citizen, the Rev. Charles Beard. Resolutions were passed, a Committee appointed "to draw up a scheme for the proposed College," and the meeting was adjourned till this should have been accomplished. Six months were passed in diligent inquiry and discussion, and on 6th November the adjourned Town's Meeting met again, received the Committee's report, and appointed a General Committee to collect funds.[1]

The winter of 1878-79 was not a propitious time for appealing for large subscriptions in Liverpool. Most of the prominent members of the Church of England were interested in an endeavour to raise £100,000 to endow a Bishopric. Some of the more ardent promoters of the College

[1] These particulars, as well as most of those in the foregoing sketch, are taken from a pamphlet called "The First Page of the History of University College, Liverpool, by one of the Honorary Secretaries."

saw in the latter fact the best argument for haste in urging the claims of their own scheme. If the Church party succeeded in raising so large a sum, the flow of public liberality would, they argued, be exhausted for a year or two at least. They were very impatient to make a beginning, and talked of starting work when £15,000 had been secured.

Although William Rathbone had on several public occasions in past years spoken strongly of the need in Liverpool for a College like Owens, he had not up till then taken much active part in the movement. He had been prevented by other business from coming to Liverpool to attend either of the Town's Meetings, although he had sent to both letters of warm approval and encouragement. But his skill in collecting funds for public objects was well known, and he came forward at this juncture. He told the promoters plainly that it was courting failure to establish a College with the sum they had named. It would be a poor, struggling institution. No one would be proud of it, or contribute to it largely. His advice was not to hasten with a general canvass, but to wait till the Church party had collected their funds, and till the impending General Election was over. If run simultaneously, the two schemes might divert attention from and injure each other. But giving to public objects was both a contagion and a habit: the effect of the

Bishopric fund might be to inculcate the habit in some of those who had hitherto shown least evidence of it; there were many others who would under no circumstances contribute to both funds. In the meantime he recommended that the early and active promoters of the scheme, who were for the most part men of not very large means, should put down their names for such sums as they were themselves prepared to give. This would be the best evidence of their earnestness, and would stimulate the wealthier commercial class into doing their share. This suggestion was adopted, and a special list raised of subscriptions from those "interested in or connected with" any branch of literature, science, or art.

On January 16, 1879, the annual address at the prize-giving of the Liverpool Council of Education was delivered by Canon Lightfoot.[1] After speaking at length on the work of the Council and on the projected University College, he concluded with the following peroration :—

Let me therefore invite you to accompany me for a few minutes on a visit to Dreamland. We will dip into the future, and see the glories that shall be.

I was in a great seaport city, bristling with masts. The exact year I cannot remember; but the twentieth century was still young. I stood before a stately pile of

[1] Rev. Canon Lightfoot, D.D. (1828-89), made Bishop of Durham in 1879.

buildings, graceful in character and harmonious in proportions. The style was new to me, but it seemed as if it might have been suggested to some creative genius out of the various reproductions and imitations of ancient buildings which I remember to have seen in my waking hours, the motley architecture of the Victorian era. "This central pile," said my guide, "is University College. The buildings which were first erected were soon found to be too small to meet our requirements, and too mean to satisfy our tastes. They were therefore pulled down, and the edifice which you see was raised in their place." He then called my attention to other buildings of a more domestic character, which were grouped about the central edifice at various distances. "These," he continued, "are private Hostels or Colleges, in which students are housed, who live together under special superintendence. The bond of union is the pursuit of some special line of study, or the membership in some particular religious body. The building to your right is the Bishop's Theological College, where his candidates for the ministry are trained."

"But is he not afraid," I asked, "to allow his candidates for the ministry to mix with students of all classes and opinions?" "Not at all," he replied; "you see there is no interference with the domestic arrangements, or with the religious education which is given within the walls of his own building; and this satisfies him. He finds that intercourse with others only tempers the rancour of religious controversy, without quenching the fervour of religious zeal. Meanwhile, a great and paramount advantage is secured to his students. They have such opportunities of a liberal education, at a small cost, as they could not find elsewhere; and thus they are saved

from that intellectual narrowness which the too exclusive training of an ordinary theological college is said to foster."

I then entered the central building with my guide, and passed through long suites of museums, libraries, and lecture rooms, all well arranged and suitably furnished.

And seeing room after room assigned to some different professor, I could not refrain from asking another question, "How, in addition to all these museums and laboratories, of which the maintenance must be so costly, do you find salaries for such a numerous professoriate?" "There is no difficulty about that," replied my guide. "Several of the Chairs are endowed by public subscriptions. These bear the names of famous men who have been natives of the place or otherwise connected with it. This room, you observe, belongs to the Roscoe Professor of the Romance Languages and Literature; the next to the Gibson Professor of Fine Arts. On the door beyond you will see the name of the Canning Professor of English History; and on the other side of the corridor that of the Huskisson Professor of Political Economy. But not a few of the professorships are endowed by the munificence of individual benefactors, whose names they bear. The inhabitants of a seaport," he continued, "are naturally given to liberality. They contract something of the open-handedness which is characteristic of sailors. Our wealthy men here are not careful to amass larger fortunes than they can employ with advantage. Experience has taught them that, after reasonable provision has been made for their families, the further accumulation of wealth does not increase the store of happiness either for themselves or for their children. All the citizens are proud of University College. Along with their shipping, they regard it

as the great glory of the place. Accordingly, when a wealthy merchant, or shipowner, or banker has had an exceptionally prosperous year, almost his first thought is how he may increase the efficiency of this institution. Hence, when any new branch of study springs up, or when in any old branch the classes become too numerous for a single professor, the Academic Council has made it a rule to give the preference to those who in some way or other have rendered services to the cause of education, and that citizen is selected whose services, in their opinion, have been the greatest. The competition has thus been reduced, and the honour enhanced. No distinction is more coveted by a man himself, or more valued by his family, than a place on the roll of benefactors."

While I was musing on what I had heard, the scene gradually faded as in a dissolving view; and I found myself once again in the hall where I had stood when my dream came upon me. I was still, however, in Dreamland. It was the twentieth century as before. The Council of Education was holding its fortieth annual meeting, if I remember rightly. The chairman was addressing the assemblage. His main theme was the influence of University College in raising the character of elementary education throughout the city. He read a long roll containing names of pupils who, having received their earliest lessons in the elementary schools, had distinguished themselves during the past year in the several professorial classes. They had been assisted by scholarships granted under the scheme of the Council, and thus they had risen step by step. The result, he said, had more than justified the hopes of the first founders of University College. It had sent new

pulses of life throbbing through the whole educational system of the place to its extremities. The President sat down, and the Treasurer rose to speak. The state of the finances, he said, was somewhat embarrassing. In the earlier days of the Association they had found a difficulty in making both ends meet. The efforts of the Association had not met with that cordial response which they might have expected. But several years before the end of the last century the citizens suddenly awoke to the fact that a great and beneficent educational work was going on under the direction of the Council. From that time forward subscriptions poured in. The balance was increasing annually, although all the legitimate objects of the Association were provided for——

And here I awoke. An actual audience—real flesh and blood—sat before me, wondering whether the address ever would come to an end.

The question of funds was just then the main preoccupation of the promoters of the College. On hearing this speech, William Rathbone said to himself, "The thing is done. He has shown us the lines on which to raise the money." As soon as the election of 1880 was over, he gladly shook his mind free from politics and set out to realise part of the Canon's dream. He began by agreeing with his two brothers to found a King Alfred Chair of Modern Literature and English Language, in memory of one of the earliest English educationalists. Then, going only to those from whom large contributions might be expected, he and

those who worked with him secured the foundation of a number of Chairs, each by an individual or by a group of men linked together by some common bond of interest or circumstance. Thus the Gladstone Chair of Greek was endowed by three admirers of Liverpool's greatest citizen, Colonel A. H. Brown, Mr. William Crosfield, and Mr. Barrow; the Chair of Mental and Moral Philosophy, subjects especially cultivated in Scottish Universities, by a number of Scottish merchants, headed by Mr. Alexander Balfour and Mr. Samuel Smith; the Roscoe Chair of Art by persons interested in perpetuating the name of one who had done much to foster the literary and artistic life of the city. The late Lord Derby, whose father had given a Natural History Museum to the town, completed the gift by a Chair of Natural History. Mr. Edward Whitley, who was plied with the argument that the credit of founding a University College must not be entirely left to Radicals and heretics, provided funds out of the Roger Lyon Jones Trust to endow a Chair of Mathematics and Physics. The Chair of Chemistry was endowed by Mrs. Grant, and the Chemical Laboratories by a body of manufacturers and tradesmen whose business owed much to the science which they thus helped to cultivate. In these and such ways the sum of £80,000 was raised in the space of about six weeks, and

announced at a Town's Meeting held on 22nd July 1880.

The next eighteen months were spent by the Special Committee appointed for the purpose in securing a site, drawing out a constitution, drafting a Charter, and filling up the offices of Principal and professors. Most of the work was done by small sub-committees, in which, among five or six equally active members, the Rev. Charles Beard was perhaps the leading spirit. William Rathbone was a member both of the General and Special Committees, but owing to the parliamentary work of his new constituency he was not able to take much share in the details of organisation, though upon all large questions of policy, as well as upon matters of finance, he was in frequent consultation, and his views had full weight. The principles for which he chiefly cared, and as to which he seems to have been in accord with most of those who took a leading part in the foundation of University College, may be worth briefly noting.

Most of his colleagues were men who, like himself, had never been members of any English University, and as merchants, manufacturers, or shipowners they belonged to a class which is sometimes accused, especially by those who have never lived in a great commercial city, of measuring everything by money. Yet the spirit in which they approached their task showed not a trace of

the vulgar Transatlantic megalomania from which even strictly academic circles do not always appear free, which measures the greatness of a College and the value of its work by the magnificence of its buildings, the value of its endowments, and the number of professors and lecturers in each Faculty. Thus the first rule they laid down was that, as William Rathbone put it, living stones were more important than dead ones, and that not an unnecessary penny should be spent upon buildings until a sufficient initial staff of professors and lecturers had been adequately endowed. In this spirit they resisted the wish of some of the friends of the College to begin by erecting stately buildings upon a conspicuous and dignified but inconvenient site, and insisted on being content with the modest accommodation afforded by a disused lunatic asylum in a poor but central quarter of the city. "Get the right men and let them prove their worth, and then plenty of Liverpool citizens will come forward to provide them with all the equipment they want," was the maxim on which they acted, and when the time was ripe they themselves took good care that the assurance they had given should be fulfilled. William Rathbone used to tell with pride how, when this later stage was reached and he took a possible benefactor to see the professor for whom he hoped to induce him to erect a laboratory, they found the learned man instructing his class in a

room so small that he had to climb over the table to greet his visitors. So far from being ashamed of these small beginnings, they believed that a College thus arising out of "the conviction of a community," and built up by slow degrees by the efforts and sacrifices of the citizens, was a healthier and likely to be in the end a more powerful institution than one created by the stroke of a millionaire's pen.

Upon this ground these early founders did not desire, although of course they could not have refused, had it unfortunately been offered, any single endowment so large as to do away with the necessity for further effort. Their ambition was to obtain, beside a large number of endowments for special purposes, a general sustentation fund, composed of a great number of yearly subscriptions from all classes of the citizens. This ambition was never adequately realised; but perhaps the city grant now received achieves, in a more modern form, somewhat the same end, in giving all the citizens an interest in and a responsibility for the University.

But although they were content to develop by degrees, they were yet determined that the beginnings that were made should be on the highest possible level, and on a scale that would make the College from the first worthy of the greatness of the city. William Rathbone, in this as in all his work, was foremost in deprecating a false economy, and

in insisting that whatever expenditure was necessary to the efficiency of the work must be boldly risked, without a close scrutiny of ways and means, in the confidence that funds would be forthcoming to meet it. Experience fully justified his faith in the generosity of his fellow-citizens, and the daring financial policy which his colleagues and he inaugurated has been so well maintained, that in the year of its becoming a University, in spite of total benefactions exceeding half a million, the annual excess of the expenditure of the College over its income was about £5000, and its accumulated deficit nearly £20,000. This boldness in incurring debt was justified by the consideration that the majority of those responsible for it were men of great experience in business, themselves possessed of large means, and together easily capable at an extremity of making good a deficiency much larger than they risked.

It was no doubt partly with a view to financial security that in framing the constitution of the College they insisted that upon its Council, as the body responsible for the conduct of its external affairs, the decision of all large questions of policy, and the choice of its staff, the lay element should predominate over the professorial. To the Senate they gave full control of internal administration, and they showed no desire to intermeddle with purely educational questions. But without com-

mitting themselves to the view of the business capacities of College dons so baldly expressed in the will of the late Cecil Rhodes, they yet felt that in the organisation of a great civic University College or University, there was plenty of room for the help of men who possessed a wide experience of affairs, an understanding of local conditions, and also a freedom, due to their more occasional connection with the College, from the personal complications that are apt to embarrass the action of bodies exclusively composed of fellow-members of the same staff.

Another point upon which these founders laid great stress was, that the subjects included in the Arts Faculty and the pure Sciences should be provided for before the technical and more strictly utilitarian side of the University curriculum was developed. William Rathbone's own interests and sympathies, and probably those of many of his colleagues, were upon the whole more with the latter side than with the cultivation, at any rate of the classical languages, and upon the importance of technical education to industry they felt very strongly. But they argued that in a great commercial centre these considerations were in no danger of being overlooked, and that while enthusiasm for the College was strong and its character undecided, the more strictly educational and less remunerative studies should be first

provided for. It thus came about that the very first Chair fully endowed was that of Modern Literature, a subject which was at that time practically untaught either at Oxford or Cambridge.

At the same time, they were anxious that the range of studies should meet the practical needs of students of all classes and pursuits. William Rathbone was especially interested in the problem of how youths intended for business might be enabled to take advantage of the University course. He did not at all share the opinion commonly expressed that higher studies unfitted young men for business. On the contrary, he held that such studies ought to make them more intelligent in their work, as well as to be a source of happiness in their lives. But he was very doubtful whether any large number of such men either would or could spare the three years usually necessary for taking a degree. On this ground he was a strong supporter of the proposal once brought forward in Victoria University, that men who had passed a special preliminary examination should be allowed to enter for the degree examination after only two years' attendance at classes. This proposal was not carried, but arrangements were later made in University College for a special two years' course, with a leaving certificate, for men intended for business. This course became especially associated in William

Rathbone's mind with the memory of his son Edward, who just before his untimely death in 1886 had been keenly interested in the arrangements for it.

Another favourite plan of his, which the memories of his own years at Heidelberg so commended to him that he perhaps preferred it to any other, was that youths should go for two or three years into an office upon leaving school and then, when old enough to appreciate opportunities of study, and to know the subjects upon which they desired knowledge, should spend a year or more either at a University or, if better suited to the bent of their minds, in foreign travel. Of the two old Universities he had a curiously strong distrust: sometimes it seemed almost a prejudice. He thought their atmosphere mentally and morally enervating, at least for average men and those who had no special stimulus to work. For those who were clever, ambitious, and poor, he had less fear, and several such men and women owed their careers at Oxford or Cambridge wholly or partly to him.

The task of selecting the Principal and professors who were to guide the first steps of the infant College, and to whom, in the event, so much of its great success was due, occupied several of the summer months of 1881. The Council—or, at any rate, William Rathbone and some of those most

actively concerned in the choice—started with a declared preference for youth, thinking that young men would be less wedded to the traditions of the old Universities and more interested in working out a new type, suited to the conditions of the city. With this intention they filled the office of Principal and of the first five professorships with men none of whom was much above thirty years of age.[1]

One incident of these early days is so characteristic of William Rathbone, and of the naïve though effective strategy which he sometimes practised, that I cannot refrain, with the narrator's permission, from quoting it :

In our College affairs [writes my informant] it was never Mr. Rathbone's rôle to be in opposition. Indeed, in the harmonious progress of the College there was small occasion for anybody to oppose anything. Yet my very first experience was the occasion of furnishing a proof of his determined hostility to anything that savoured of the introduction of tests. There could be no mistake about this. When I was a candidate for the Chair which I hold, I was invited to come up to Liverpool and to stay at Greenbank, so that the electors might see me. In

[1] The office of Principal and Professor of Classics was filled by Mr. G. Rendall, now headmaster of Charterhouse; the other four Chairs by Mr. Lodge, now Sir Oliver Lodge, Principal of Birmingham University; Mr. Herdman, now Professor of Natural History in Liverpool University; Mr. A. C. Bradley, now Professor of Poetry in Oxford University; and Mr. J. MacCunn, now Professor of Philosophy in Liverpool University.

order to meet some members of Council it was necessary to go down to the city, and Mr. Rathbone asked me—a little, I own, to my surprise—if I would do him the favour of coming back to Greenbank at once, as soon as the necessary interviews were over. I suppose he felt that some explanation of this request was expected, or at least needful. At any rate, he said that some person or persons (I forget if he suggested there was more than one, but I think he did) seemed to be desirous of introducing considerations as to religious beliefs into the election; and he added that he was "determined" that they should not have an opportunity of doing so. No one ever carried out a purpose with more vigilance. He first took me to a club, where I met several members of the College Council at luncheon, and thereafter accompanied me to the office of another. These interviews over, and no opportunity given to any one privately to diagnose my faith or lack of faith, he parted with me (I rather think he put me in a cab), with careful injunctions to return direct to Greenbank, where, I need not say, I was sufficiently safe against all inappropriate inquisitions. I don't think these precautions were by any means unnecessary. Indeed I have good reason to think, from a comparison of my own with other experiences, that questions of an inquisitive character might have been forthcoming. But whether this be so or not, the circumstances are worth mentioning. They bring out a trait in Mr. Rathbone of which I daresay those who knew him well were well aware—I mean that firmness, and instinct of resistance, which I think were sometimes hidden by his tolerance and geniality from those who knew him only in part. And his vigilance in the present instance was the more justifiable because the Charter of

the College was so drawn as stringently (too stringently perhaps) to secularise the institution.

His attitude on this question, and also on the whole question of religious teaching in our Colleges, is of peculiar interest because he was so far from being a "secularist" in his sympathies. I have heard him express, with deep conviction, his sense of the importance of the consolations and support of religion in life; and every one knows how ready he was to recognise the work of all religious denominations and to co-operate with them. He never seemed to me to have the least tincture of the suspicion which some Nonconformist liberals have of Church influence. And I have always supposed that the very stringent clause in University College Charter —in the framing of which he must of course have been consulted—represents only what he thought was a basis of common action, and not the ideal relation between a college and theological study. This, however, is but conjecture.

The article in the Charter referred to is certainly definite enough, and it is not likely that there was upon the part of any one a deliberate intention of violating it, though honest zeal might occasionally be over-anxious in the scrutiny of credentials :

It is a fundamental condition of the constitution of the College that no student, professor, teacher, or other officer or person connected with the College shall be required to make any declaration as to his religious opinions, or submit to any test whatsoever thereof; and that no gift or endowment for theological or religious

purposes, or having any theological condition attached thereto, shall be accepted on behalf of the College.

The University College of Liverpool began active work in January 1882. It had barely been afloat a year, and was still making large demands upon the time and thoughts of its founders, when William Rathbone, by that time member of Parliament for Carnarvonshire, found himself in the thick of a movement for establishing a like College for North Wales. The Report published in 1881 of the Departmental Inquiry into Intermediate and Higher Education in Wales[1] had recommended that two Colleges of University rank should be instituted, one in the north and one in the south of the Principality, and that each should receive a grant of £4000 a year. The Government, yielding to the instance of Lord Aberdare, Mr. Mundella, and other friends of Wales, agreed to make this grant on condition that the Colleges were established within a certain time. There was among the Welsh people no lack of eagerness to take advantage of this offer. Next to religion, as William Rathbone often remarked, education was the topic in which his constituents were most deeply interested. Unfortunately the religious interest, which took precedence, was apt to assume the form of sectarian jealousy, and this threatened to prevent all common action in the foundation of the College.

[1] See Chapter XI.

Another obstacle to union was the difficulty of selecting a suitable locality. There was in North Wales no town of acknowledged pre-eminence or large size, and this had been represented by the academic experts, who are always ready to throw cold water on the educational aspirations of what they are pleased to consider insignificant places or people, as an insuperable obstacle to the whole project.[1] North Wales herself did not take this view, but no less than nine of her towns were competing for the honour of receiving the College, and none of them would subscribe anything until its home was fixed. A further claim was put in by the Council of the University College established some years before at Aberystwyth, to be recognised as meeting the wants of North Wales and so secure the Government grant. On January 23, 1883, a Conference was held at Chester to arrange a plan of action. A representative Committee was appointed to decide the question of the site of the College, but their choice was limited to the six northern counties, thus tacitly excluding Aberystwyth. This exclusion, which William Rathbone always deplored, gave great offence, and injuriously

[1] Thus, Professor Marshall of Cambridge, when asked before the Departmental Committee, "Suppose a College were to be established away from any large centre of population, do you think it would be able to hold its own?" replied: "It would be utterly impossible to support a good College away from a centre of population without an enormous expenditure on scholarships." The actual expenditure of the North Wales College on scholarships is modest enough.

affected the educational movement for several years. William Rathbone, who had been abroad at the time of this meeting, was on his return appointed Honorary Secretary of the Sites Committee, and soon became, according to the generous estimate of one of his fellow-workers, "the pivot of the whole movement." Whether that be so or not (and he would never have admitted it), he certainly found in the work plenty of scope for his energies, as well as for his undeniable faculty for reconciling divergent views and getting people of conflicting political and religious opinions to work harmoniously together.

The Sites Committee were soon convinced that, as many of them represented towns that were competing for the College, and were thus in the position of advocates as well as judges, it was impossible for them to fulfil the duty entrusted to them with any hope of a general concurrence in their decision. At William Rathbone's suggestion they accordingly passed a sort of self-denying ordinance, and agreed to waive the question of the place of the College until after funds had been raised, and then to refer it to arbitrators, with the understanding that in making the award, some regard should be paid to the amount of support offered by the competing towns, as being a test of their interest in education and the number of students likely to be expected from them. Having

thus ingeniously provided themselves with a powerful argument to stimulate local generosity, they formed their more active members into an organising committee, and having secured the services of Mr. Cadwaladr Davies as secretary, began a campaign of meetings and canvassing for subscriptions. At a second Conference at Chester in July, they were able to announce that over £28,000 had been promised; arbitrators were appointed, and in August, by their unanimous award, Bangor was selected as the site for the new College. The remainder of the year was spent in drawing up a constitution and Charter. Mr. Henry Jones, then a lecturer at Aberystwyth College, now Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Glasgow, was asked by William Rathbone to draw up a draft Charter as a basis to work upon, and this, after much discussion and amendment, was accepted in its main lines.

The Court of Governors met in February 1884, and elected the Council by a double ballot, William Rathbone's name heading both ballots. The task of selecting a Principal and professors followed, and in October 1884 the University College of North Wales began its first session. In order that the College might have from the first a nucleus of comparatively advanced students, William Rathbone induced some friends to join him in starting a number of valuable entrance

scholarships with the condition that they should only be awarded to students of unusual merit. This proved a great stimulus to its development.

Some further incidents in the movement which led to this end are related in a letter written by William Rathbone many years later to Professor Henry Jones.

It appears accurate in its main facts, and although, as he says, it was not written for the public eye, there is nothing in it that seems likely, after the lapse of twenty years, to wound any legitimate susceptibilities.

GREENBANK, *July* 27, 1899.

I have sometimes thought it might be interesting to keep a record of our joint experience in the origin and organisation of University College, North Wales, but my memory is so defective. Moreover, there are some experiences which, though rather amusing to remember, might not be exactly suited to the public eye. I therefore thought I would put my remembrances down just as they came into my head, and you would perhaps tell me where I had been wrong.

It was a singular beginning, to organise a University College when Wales was so fearfully behindhand all round. Her Elementary Education defective beyond Scotland, or even England; perhaps even Ireland. Her High Schools very few, and those there were, not those most necessary for the practical wants of Wales, and certainly not sufficient to provide material for a College in either principles or quality of training, and our educa-

tional friends, with Mr. Bruce, and other members of the Commission, and Mr. Mundella at their head, were bold in commencing to build the educational fabric from its apex instead of from its foundation. They did it, of course, because the Government could do this without a Bill, and they could not so attack Intermediate Education ; and you know how heartily the matter was taken up in Wales ; and, strange to say, the result has justified them in thus beginning at the top.

My first remembrance of the matter was the mistake made at a meeting in London, from which many of us were away, in excluding Aberystwyth from the places to be considered for the North Wales one of the two Colleges. At the first meeting on my return I protested most strongly against this slight on Aberystwyth. I did not believe that the Commissioners could, or would, accept Aberystwyth as the North Wales College, but it seemed most ungracious thus to refuse even to consider our pioneer in the Welsh College work. I was outvoted, and it ended in the three Colleges. I believe the other arrangement would have ended in transferring Aberystwyth to Bangor. I do not know whether this has been, in the end, a disadvantage or not. But, however, as member for Carnarvonshire, I saw Mr. Richard Davies, John Roberts, and one or two others, and suggested that we should approach Lord Penrhyn as the best means of uniting all parties and sects in the work ; and we each agreed that, if he would take his natural position at the head of the movement, we would join in each giving £1000 to start with. He wrote to me most cordially, saying that he would at once do so if religious and political differences were kept out of our action. This was most fortunate, as it choked off a

great many difficulties and differences; for, as you will remember, mutual distrust and jealousies ran rather high both in political and religious matters just at that time.

I remember that capital fellow and true educationalist, the Dean of Bangor—a hot Churchman and politician—coming to see me in the Lobby, full of fight, and convinced that we were going to try to monopolise it as a Nonconformist institution, and using all manner of threats to destroy us. I told him, in the most friendly and cheerful manner, that we had not the slightest wish or intention of thought of making it a Nonconformist College. For it to become so would be a great misfortune, as it ought to unite all Wales on a question on which parties political and religious ought to be able to unite, and perhaps the only great question on which they could cordially unite; but that though he and his friends could make this impossible, they could not smash the College, as the effect of their attack would be to rouse everything that was patriotic and everything that was combative in the Welsh nature, and he knew well enough what Welshmen would do when thus roused. It might make the temporary success even more rapid than by the union of the parties. He then threatened me with setting Lord Penrhyn against us; I was able to tell him that Lord Penrhyn had already taken his line, which was that of union, on condition of political and religious discord being excluded, and that he, as a patriotic Welshman, would I hoped join heartily with us; which, as you know, he did; for he was hearty in both capacities.

The next difficulty that loomed ahead was very curious—the Charter. As you know, we took immense trouble to make it as representative of Wales and Welshmen, and every section, as was possible; and in this you

were, in the main, our adviser and draftsman, as far as political and religious matters were concerned. In fact, you very largely drafted that part of it. But when it came out, our strong Nonconformist friends all fell upon me, whom they accused of having thrown the whole power into the hands of the Conservative and Church and Landlord party; and I believe had my election come on then, I should have been ignominiously expelled. I could really hardly take the thing seriously, but I told my friends very plainly that if it proved Conservative and Church it must be because Welshmen were so, or were so slavishly dependent as to knock under to wealth and position, for I asserted, that not only the instructions, but the carrying out of them by the draftsman of the Charter were such as to make it absolutely representative of Wales and Welshmen. Well, I think they were, when they came to look into it and think it over, a little ashamed of their suspicions; but the result was phenomenal.

If I remember aright, there were only two or three Conservatives or Churchmen on the governing body, and of course the whole Church party would have broken off; but the very men who had asserted that the effect of it would be to throw the power into the hands of the Church and Conservatives came to me and asked me to write to the Universities and to Government and beg them to supply the deficiency by nominating the principal Conservative and Church educationalists as their nominees. This was done, and all was harmony again. I ought to mention here, that while some of our Conservative and Church friends were furious, and disposed to throw up altogether, the Dean of Bangor, who had been the hottest at first, saw at once it was not an intentional

mistake, and wrote to his friends to use the powers that remained to rectify it, which accordingly was done. We got a thoroughly good Council, with the phenomenal result that with a majority of Liberals and Nonconformists on the Council, and an overwhelming one on the Court, our first President selected was the Earl of Powis—a strong Conservative, Church landowner; our first Chairman of Council, the hottest Tory and Churchman in the county; and our first Principal, the son of an Irish Bishop, himself a strong Conservative and Churchman. All chosen, of course, not because of, but in spite of their religious and political opinions: because the first was a literary man of great eminence; the second, a strong educationalist and good Churchman and man of business; and the third, a man of whom the next in turn of the candidates said to me when we had done, that we had chosen a man head and shoulders above all the candidates, which, of course, included himself. And we succeeded in obtaining a set of young men as professors, who have raised the College to be in the very first rank of University Colleges. . . .

When the row about the Charter was on, I told them that our principal adviser therein had been a Welshman of the Welsh and a Nonconformist of the Nonconformists, but I did not feel it right to give up your name, as it would have been "throwing you to the wolves" had their sentiments remained as they were. I think the Charter was a great success, and I may say so without taking to myself any credit whatever, because though I, as member for Carnarvonshire, was the medium to a great extent, you and Cadwaladr Davies were the authors of the lines upon which the Charter was drawn. And I am often reminded with great pleasure of our work together,

when you two, and Richard Davies, and W. A. Darbishire,[1] were my instructors in Welsh ideas and Welshmen. I only hope you have been as successful and beneficial to Glasgow University and Scotland as you were to Bangor and Wales. W. RATHBONE.

With both the Colleges that he had thus helped to the birth, William Rathbone remained in very close connection for the rest of his working life. Up to the year 1892, when he was made President of the North Wales College, he held the same position—that of Vice-President—in both Councils. As time went on, the College in Liverpool and probably also that in Bangor won new friends, such as the late Mr. George Holt, who were able to be more continuously in touch with their affairs than he could be, and whose generosity needed no stimulating. But at every crisis in the affairs of either, and at many times when there was no crisis, he was to be found to the front. The subsequent progress cannot be described here,—the speedy admission of Liverpool into the Victoria University, the creation of a University of Wales with three constituent Colleges, the development in both of department after department, and the erection of a seemingly endless series of buildings and laboratories ; finally, the transmutation, which he did not live to see consummated, of Liverpool University

[1] In a subsequent letter, he added the name of Mr. R. A. Jones of Liverpool to this list.

College into the University of Liverpool. In all these, except the last, he took an active part.

His interest was not at all diminished by being shared between the two Universities, nor was it limited to their outward organisation.

The gain of Wales [says Professor MacCunn] was never the loss of Liverpool. How else can we read the fact that, as often as our College has made some large stride in its swift progress, this has usually happened, by a coincidence not difficult to explain, when Mr. Rathbone was back amongst us. . . . Never, since colleges were built, have teachers found a man more ready and eager to give them sympathy without stint, and encouragement that never failed, or to repose in them a more generous and enheartening confidence. It was not that he set any special store upon himself as an authority in education. "You know I am only an outsider in these matters," this is what many a time he used to say. And yet few men have had occasion seriously to converse with him about education, or to mark the passion for the spread of knowledge which possessed him, without taking with them as result a deepened conviction that Education was one of the great causes worth living for, and, one may hope, an invigorated resolve to make it something more like what Mr. Rathbone wished it to become.

A colleague in North Wales, writing of him after his death, in the College Magazine, strikes somewhat the same note :

He identified himself so completely with the College and its work that we had come to regard him almost as a

part of it; and it was always his pride to speak of his connection with the College not as that of an external administrator of its affairs, but as that of one who belonged to it, and to whom all its interests and activities were intimate and vital. In losing him we have, as it were, lost one of our own household.

The words reveal the personal feeling of the writers, and it was in fact the relations of friendship that grew up between him and the men who were doing the actual work of the Colleges, that made it possible for him, in spite of prolonged absences and other engrossing claims, to sustain the vivid interest and the intimate knowledge to which they testify.

University education, though circumstances made it the branch of education with which he had most to do, was not the only branch in which he was interested, nor, in fact, the one which in his opinion stood in most urgent need of extension and improvement. The points in which his work touched elementary, intermediate, and technical education can be only briefly noted.

In 1869 he joined Mr. George Melly in establishing scholarships, to be called after the name of Mr. Forster, from the elementary schools to the Liverpool Institute. These were the beginning of the scholarships given by the Council of Education, of which there are now more than fifty. In the discussions of Mr. Forster's Act of the following

year he spoke in favour of Mr. Dixon's proposal to entrust the management of the State schools to the Town Councils rather than to bodies elected *ad hoc*. He did not join with Mr. Dixon and the Birmingham league in their attacks on the religious compromise of the Act. The attack made by the league on Mr. Gladstone drew from him a protest against "the application of the joint-stock limited liability principle to the consciences of the Liberal party." Caring himself a great deal for the ethical and spiritual side of religious teaching, and very little for questions of doctrine, he utterly failed to foresee the dark future of sectarian controversy and intrigue which that unfortunate compromise was to bring upon the country.

After the passing of the Act, some of the best inspectors were withdrawn from their work in order to ascertain the needs of localities for additional schools. William Rathbone urged upon Mr. Forster that more and not less efficient inspection was needed, but as he could not move him to fresh appointments he offered himself to find and provide the salary of a highly qualified inspector in Liverpool, who should follow the Government inspector, reporting only on the training given in the schools to the pupil-teachers and on their care of the more advanced pupils. Premiums were to be given to the masters and mistresses of schools which obtained a favourable

report, as an inducement to submit to this inspection. The offer was accepted, and the Rev. John Diggle (now Bishop of Carlisle) undertook the work of inspection. The result showed that in nearly every case the schools which gave most attention to the training of the pupil-teachers, and to the teaching of subjects which did not bear directly on the grants, were also those which obtained the highest grants, thus indicating that the higher the tone of the school, the better the mere mechanical results.

But it was only towards the end of his active life that he had much to do with the organisation of school education. His share in securing for Wales the Intermediate Education Act of 1889 will be noticed in a later chapter. It happened that in the autumn following the Act he was consulted by his friend, Mr. Tate,[1] as to the disposal of a very large sum of money which Mr. Tate proposed devoting to public objects. The correspondence between them ended not only in large benefactions to district nursing, but in the formation of a trust for the promotion of intermediate and technical education in Liverpool and North Wales. William Rathbone was one of several trustees. He had himself laid aside a considerable sum for helping to carry out the Act, especially in the quarry districts. This he

[1] Sir Henry Tate, Bart. (1819-1899).

regarded as a way of paying what he called the debt owed by the friends of Wales to the quarrymen for the lead they had given in founding the College at Aberystwyth. The principles upon which the funds drawn from both these sources were expended were very characteristic of his ideas as to public benefactions of all kinds. Knowing the danger lest large contributions from one or two donors should simply relieve the pockets of others, who perhaps were or ought to be more directly interested in the localities, he laid it down that nothing should be given to any school until the whole sum required by the County Governing Body to qualify it for assistance under the Act had been raised by the locality. Not content with this, he usually made the contribution, which Sir Henry Tate and he were prepared to make, the excuse for bringing all his powers of moral suasion to bear on the well-to-do residents to induce large gifts. His letters upon such occasions usually observed the precept which he was fond of commending to others who had to "beg" for public objects, viz. to be very definite in their petitions, and to model them upon that of the clergyman who prayed every night: "Give me, O Lord, a moderate competence; I mean, O Lord, £800 a year, payable quarterly." The mixture of outspokenness with rather transparent diplomacy in some of these letters must have often

amused, and occasionally no doubt irritated their recipients; but very frequently the real wisdom of his arguments, as well as the enthusiasm they revealed, brought a generous response. Substantial aid was thus given to the building and equipment of workshops and laboratories, or to the salary of the masters, and in this way a large number of schools were helped, and an amount of local effort stimulated or called into being far in excess of the expenditure. One instance may illustrate the kind of co-operation thus induced. At Bethesda, as one of the three great centres of the quarry districts, it was decided to establish an intermediate and technical school that might serve as a model for other localities. Lord Penrhyn, feeling an anxiety, which later events in which he bore part has justified, as to what would be the fate of the population in the quarry districts of Carnarvonshire if anything should occur to mar the slate industry, provided a site, £200, and heating apparatus costing £200 more. Over £1000 was raised by the other residents, and of this nearly £800 came from the pockets of the quarrymen themselves, who also volunteered to lay out the playground in their leisure hours. The remaining sum of about £1200 was jointly contributed by Sir Henry Tate and William Rathbone.

William Rathbone's work was not confined to providing funds. To the planning of buildings,

to the appointment of masters, to all questions that concerned the type of school that should be established, he gave close attention, and he was in correspondence with most of the men on the spot, as well as with educational experts of all kinds elsewhere. His main anxiety was that the sort of education offered in the new schools should be from the first of a thoroughly practical kind. The ambition of the clever boys and girls in Wales, as elsewhere, had been too much directed to clerical work, and to the learned professions that were already overstocked. It should be the function of the schools to make the pupils realise the skill required and the scientific principles involved in agriculture, mining, and in skilled handicrafts. Above all, his influence was invaluable in getting all sections and classes to work together. In this task it could probably be said with as much truth as of the foundation of the College, that "his fairness of mind, breadth of view, and absolute disinterestedness, commanded the confidence of both parties, enabling him to perform feats of reconciliation that were impossible to any one else." [1]

[1] Principal Reichel, *North Wales College Magazine*, May 1902.

CHAPTER X

THE POOR LAW, CHARITY AND SOCIAL REFORM

"The faith I believe in is the faith that whatever ought to be done can be done."—"Success": Address by W. R. to the Liverpool Institute.

It is difficult to find the proper place for this chapter, for the work it covers was scattered over the last thirty-five years of William Rathbone's life. He had been made a member of the Select Vestry, as we have seen, in 1867, in order that he might help in the management of the system of trained nursing which, acting from a distance and through others, he had already succeeded in introducing there; and he remained a member till his death. During the three or four winter months which were all that he was able while in Parliament to spend in Liverpool, he used regularly to attend the meetings of the Vestry, as well as of the Central Relief Society and the other philanthropic and educational bodies to which he belonged.

He periodically offered his colleagues on the Vestry to retire if they thought his attendance

insufficient, but they always generously pressed him to remain, and seeing that so much of his attention in Parliament was being given to questions of local, and especially of Poor Law administration, it was well worth his while to keep in touch with the practical working of the law. Apart from this motive, it would have been a hard wrench for him voluntarily to have relinquished the title of Guardian of the Poor. The problem of poverty had begun to weigh upon him as a youth, and his mind turned to it again and again. His uneasiness about it lay at the root of his anxiety for a better system of local government and taxation, for the spread of education, for workhouse and district nursing. All these were means of modifying the causes or of alleviating the effects of poverty ; the Poor Law and voluntary charity grappled with the thing itself. It was the principal penalty that he paid for going into Parliament that it took him away from Liverpool too early and returned him thither too late to attempt to work out to his own satisfaction some of the reforms in administration which he felt to be needed and made several partial efforts to formulate.

In 1867, the year before his return to Parliament, he published a modest little book which gives his ideas on these subjects so far as he had then got. It bore the somewhat repelling title of *Social Duties: considered in Reference to the*

Organisation of Effort in Works of Benevolence and Public Utility; by a Man of Business,[1] and was, in more modern phrase, simply a plea for the organisation of charity. The ideas it contains were beginning to be in many people's minds, as was illustrated some years ago by the rather unedifying dispute which took place in the columns of the *Times* between several gentlemen who all claimed the credit of being the founders of the London Charity Organisation Society, started in 1869. Now that these ideas are all familiar in theory and more or less imperfectly realised in practice in most large towns, the only interest of such books lies in seeing how far the event has justified the hopes of the early begetters of the movement.

The first chapter of *Social Duties* describes at length how the growth of large industries and the increasing segregation of different classes in different districts had broken down the old personal relations between employer and employed, and between rich and poor neighbours. This process has gone on at an accelerated pace ever since, but the means of communication have at the same time been so much improved, that the mere physical difficulties of bridging the gulf do not seem now quite so great as they are represented in these

[1] The name was pressed on him by a literary friend. He would have done better to stick to his own title, "Method *versus* Muddle and Waste in Charitable Work."

pages. It is no longer necessary for "the carriage to be ordered and the time spared for a drive of five or six miles into the town," before the wife of the rich employer can visit the sick employée; and the prosaic invention of trams and bicycles has perhaps done as much as organised charity to make possible the "bringing the two classes once more into relations of personal kindness and friendly intercourse, by services rendered without patronage and accepted without degradation." Under the heading "Charities Done and Undone," he passed in cursory review some of the principal defects and gaps in the existing mass of charities—*system* of charities it was his main point that they could not rightly be called. The gaps he mentions have been mostly more or less filled up. For example, the provision of convalescent homes for patients discharged from hospitals is noted as an almost untouched need. On the other hand, there is unfortunately nothing obsolete, even in towns where the movement for the organisation of charity has made most way, in the complaints he vents as to "the desultory nature of so much of our charity; the stimulus it requires from fancy-balls and bazaars; the greater facility with which a new institution obtains subscriptions for want of which an old one, equally meritorious, languishes; the amount of time and energy which the managers of a charity are so often forced to consume in drum-

ming together the funds required for its support." It is as true as ever that "people give less in obedience to principle than under a sudden impulse of feeling; less to fulfil an obligation than to relieve themselves of an uneasy though vague sensation of compunction."

After dilating on the incompleteness, imperfect adaptation to its functions, and caprice of existing charity, he went on to consider its possible substitutes or supplements. The Poor Law alone was not enough. It had done inestimable service in rescuing the nation from the demoralisation brought about by the old Poor Law, but—

> As a system of public charity it fails altogether. It is beyond the omnipotence of Parliament to meet the conflicting claims of justice to the community, severity to the idle and vicious, and mercy to those stricken down into penury by the visitation of God. . . .

On the other hand, a system of voluntary charity administered entirely or mainly by paid officers tends to reproduce just the effects of the Poor Law.

> Like the Poor Law machinery, it has to work by rule . . . and its rules must be framed to defeat and discourage imposture, on pain of doing much more harm than good. But it is scarcely practicable to frame a code of tests and regulations to exclude impostors which shall not tend to repel, disgust, and dishearten innocent and undeserved poverty. And even if a large discretion were allowed to the officers of the charity, these officers them-

selves, as the inevitable result of their position and the fruit of their experience, lean towards the very same error or defect which is characteristic of the rules which that experience forces upon their superiors. They find themselves in constant collision with vicious and shameless imposture: they find much of imposture and vice involved in cases of real distress; and they acquire insensibly and in their own despite, and while remaining most kind in heart and act, a suspicious, hard, and vigilant manner, a sharpness of tone, which repels the best sort of applicants, whose sensitive pride revolts at questions, tests, and precautions which, devised against imposture, seem to presuppose imposture in every application. . . . Where good is to be done to individual men, it should come from the free-will of fellow-men; the machinery, if machinery there be, should be in the background, and the voluntary benefactor should come into personal contact with his suffering brother; whereas in all endeavours to do good through mechanical organisation, it is the machinery alone which is seen by the poor; the givers, whose personal kindness and freewill-offering they might feel and acknowledge, remain invisible and unknown.

The difficulty then was to devise a system of dealing with cases of distress that should be thorough and systematic and cover the whole ground, and yet should at the same time retain the spontaneity and kindliness and "naturalness" of individual personal charity. The plan he suggests is simply an organisation of volunteer effort of the kind that is now attempted with

greater or less success by the Charity Organisation Societies of various towns. There was to be a central representative committee, with a paid official of high competence at its head. Under this there were to be a number of committees charged with different provinces of work, and also a system of district committees, composed of those working in each district and charged with the administration of relief in the district as well as with the care of those needs that could best be dealt with locally and did not come within the province of any of the centrally organised committees. The central committee, besides directing and advising the work of volunteers, was to act as a bureau for the collection and dissemination of information regarding all the charities of the town, and the more important of these were to be represented upon it. It was put forth as one of the principal merits of the scheme that it would set the clergy altogether free from the necessity of relief work, and would thus withdraw from the poor "all temptation to an affectation of religious earnestness." Unfortunately experience has shown that few of the clergy have the inclination or the courage to accept this dispensation now that it is offered them.

The details of the scheme are not very fully worked out. It is evident that on many points the writer himself was doubtful how uniformity and

control were to be secured without sacrificing the freshness and spontaneity of volunteer help and the personal relation between giver and recipient on which he laid so much stress.

A year or two after writing this little book, his attention was first drawn to the system of poor relief established in Elberfeld on the Rhine, which seemed to him just what he had been groping after. He persuaded the President of the Local Government Board, then his old friend and school-fellow, Mr. James Stansfeld, to take the very unusual step of sending a Poor Law inspector, Mr. Doyle, to report on this system, and he himself met Mr. Doyle at Elberfeld in November 1871. The system, though established by the municipality and maintained by public money, has many characteristics which according to English ideas seem proper rather to voluntary charity than to legal poor relief. There is no workhouse in the English sense, the only corresponding institution being a place of compulsory detention for the idle and dissolute, and the relief given is all what we should call outdoor relief. At the time of this visit the town, with a population of about 82,000, was divided into eighteen districts, and each district into fourteen sections. Each section was in charge of a Visitor, and the whole district was under an Overseer. There were thus eighteen Overseers and two hundred and fifty-two

Visitors, all of whom were unpaid and were legally obliged to serve, being nominated by the citizens of their respective districts and appointed by the Municipal Council. The Visitors of each section met fortnightly under their Overseers to discuss the cases and decide upon the relief. Each Visitor undertook the charge of the cases which arose in his section, but he was not, as a rule, allowed to have more than four cases under his charge at a time. The general principles of relief were laid down and the whole controlled by a body known as the "Town Administration of the Poor," consisting of a President, four members of the Municipal Council, and four citizens, usually selected from among the wealthy and more distinguished inhabitants. The most striking features of the system were the dignity and importance attached to the office of Visitor and the great subdivision of the work. The offices of Overseer and Visitor were described in the instructions to Overseers as "the most important of civic honorary offices, requiring in the persons who fill them a large measure of human kindness and an earnest sense of duty." As there were always plenty of suitable men willing and anxious to fill the two hundred and seventy posts, the compulsory powers of the law had never been exercised. In 1853, when the system had been first started in Elberfeld, the town had been divided into only sixty sections,

and each Visitor had fifteen or sixteen cases under his charge at once. It was then found very difficult to find as many as sixty men to undertake work so onerous. The cases were left unvisited or were visited by deputy ; the pauperism and expenditure of the town increased. The men with whom the system originated, and those who afterwards carried it out in the spirit in which it had been originated, attributed the increase to the want of sufficient personal intercourse between the administrators and the poor. "Everything can be done by personal intercourse with the poor, nothing without it," the Mayor remarked to the English visitors.

Seventeen years later, in 1888, hearing that the system had spread to many other large towns in Germany, William Rathbone persuaded the Local Government Board to again send an inspector to report on its further development, and arranged that he should be accompanied by Mr. Loch, of the London Charity Organisation Society, and Mr. Hanewinckel, of the Liverpool Central Relief Society. They found that the methods of administration were in its main features the same as they had been in 1871, but that the Board were about to increase the number of Visitors, so that in future each would have no more than two cases on hand at once.

This minute subdivision of work among an army of voluntary visitors was the feature of the

scheme which William Rathbone would most have liked to see introduced into the administration of poor relief, or failing that, of voluntary charity. It seemed to him that it would have the double advantage, first, of securing the services of busy and capable men and women who could not spare the time for more onerous duties, and secondly, of avoiding the officialism, the "hard suspicious tone," which those who make a profession of relief work are apt to acquire, as they become inured to the sight of poverty and soured by the recurrence of imposture. This impression was confirmed from information obtained from several of the best-organised societies for the relief of the poor in New York and Boston. In the New York Improvement Society, which at the time of inquiry relied entirely on paid agents, the employment of honorary visitors had been tried; but it had failed exactly as the first experiment with a small number of visitors at Elberfeld had done,—because the visitors, finding the claim on their time too onerous, had fallen into hasty and slovenly methods of doing their work. The Secretary of the New York Charity Organisation Society told him decidedly that no visitor could well care for more than three or four such grave problems: one was enough for most of them.

For a long time after the publication of Mr. Doyle's Report in 1874, nothing practical came of

it, and William Rathbone was too much occupied with political work to give much thought to the subject. But in the winter of 1886 several events combined to recall it to his mind. On the 9th of October of that year, his fourth son, Edward, was drowned in a boating accident on the lake of Derwentwater, at the age of twenty-six. Edward was generally thought to be the one of his children who most resembled him. Without his father's exceptional strength of constitution, he had yet much of his buoyant and abundant vitality, his geniality and sweetness of temper. He was a partner in the firm of Messrs. Ross T. Smyth, of which his father was senior partner, and he had already shown himself a keen and promising man of business. But his principal interest was in social and educational questions. Among the professors of the newly founded University College he had formed several strong friendships with men rather older than himself, and at the time of his death he was eagerly pushing forward and pressing upon the attention of his fellow-merchants a scheme for a special two years' course at the College, intended for men who were going into business and could not spare the three years necessary for taking a degree. He was full of plans for encouraging thrift among the labourers employed by his firm; for putting their work on a more regular footing; for improving the conditions of the people in the

very poor parish of St. Thomas, Toxteth, where he was Treasurer of a local society which did much good in its day.

His son's interest in these matters called William Rathbone's attention again to the question of the administration of charity, and as the winter of 1887 which followed Edward's death proved a bad one, which threw a strain on the resources of the Central Relief Society, he persuaded its Committee to reorganise their work somewhat after the model of the Elberfeld system.

The Liverpool Central Relief Society, formed in 1846 by the amalgamation of three older relief-giving societies, is now the only Society working over the whole town which investigates claims on the charitable and gives systematic relief in cases of distress. Up till 1887 it had done its work almost entirely by means of paid agents, although in two districts of the town it had a few years before begun making some use of the services of independent committees of volunteers. It was now decided to divide the whole town into districts, and the districts into sections, and to place each district under a committee of "Friendly Visitors." The preliminary inquiries on each case were made as before by the official agents of the Society, one of whom was always present at the meetings of the District Committee. The case was then handed on to the Friendly Visitor for the section in which it

occurred, who dealt with it under the direction of the Committee. It was intended so to divide the sections that each visitor might have not more than four cases at once, but it has been found in practice difficult to keep to this, as visitors themselves sometimes desire more, sometimes fewer cases, and the number of visitors is not easily kept up. This system has probably been, on the whole, a decided improvement upon that which went before it. There is more opportunity for kindly personal intercourse between the Friendly Visitor and his few families than would be possible to an official agent with a long list of cases to visit—intercourse which is at any rate very good for the visitor and not seldom, it may be hoped, of real benefit to the visited. The sectional arrangement is especially valuable, enabling each visitor thoroughly to know and become known to the inhabitants of a few streets, and the local knowledge thus obtained soon becomes very useful in estimating the merits of cases.

If no permanent effects upon the poverty of the city comparable to those of Elberfeld have been attained, it must be remembered, first, that the conditions in the two cities are widely different, and secondly, that the resemblance between the two systems is confined to the points that have been mentioned. Elberfeld is a thriving manufacturing city, in the character of its industry and the habits

of its people not unlike the district round Bradford. The majority of the labouring population are employed in factories of varied kinds; they have thus a settled occupation and their character and earnings are comparatively easily investigated. In Liverpool, with a population about four times as large as that of Elberfeld, the work connected with the carrying trade of the port occupies a larger number of adult males than any other employment. Most of this work is casual and unskilled, and it is among the families of those who are or have been engaged in it—dock and warehouse labourers and contractors' labourers of all kinds—that the greatest number of cases of distress arise. Employed here to-day and there to-morrow, their needs, earnings, and characters are difficult to ascertain; and as many of them are chronically unemployed or intermittently employed, the help given by voluntary charity is only a drop in the ocean of their needs.

The machinery of the English organisation is as much weaker as its task is harder. The overseers and visitors of Elberfeld have the power of the law behind them, and public funds to draw upon for everything they need for the purpose both of organisation and relief. All their methods show the German respect for detail and genius for taking pains. They have an elaborate system of inquiry into the characters and resources of those

whom they visit. They use to the full the large legal powers they possess of obliging relatives to give help according to their means, and are said to be far more successful in exacting these contributions than any English Board of Guardians. When, in default of, or to eke out other resources, relief is necessary, the amount granted is calculated so as to bring up the family income to an amount sufficient to keep the family in health, according to a scale drawn up by the Central Board. The Liverpool Society has, of course, no legal status, and is dependent for funds on public generosity. Its system of investigation is less thorough than is thought necessary at Elberfeld. Its help is, in the great majority of instances, confined to assisting families to tide over periods of temporary or recurrent distress by weekly grants of food and fuel to the value of from two to eight or rarely ten shillings a week. Relief is sometimes given in other ways: by sending patients to convalescent homes, by granting small pensions to old people, and occasionally by small grants to meet special needs. It has also a labour yard for able-bodied men.

Owing to William Rathbone's absorption in other work and absence from Liverpool, he was able to take little part in the direction of the methods of the Society. In addition to the introduction of the District Committees' system, there

were, however, two very successful features in its work in which he took a prominent share and a never-failing interest.

In 1871 he became acquainted with a gentleman named Andrew, who for a year past had been quietly making the experiment of sending families in which there were a large number of boys and girls, especially girls of thirteen and upwards, to the manufacturing districts of Lancashire, where there was at the time a great demand for their services, and where as workers in the mills they were able to earn good wages. The Central Relief Society took this scheme up, and in the first four years arranged for the migration of 995 persons. Its correspondents in the various manufacturing towns guaranteed employment for those sent, and found them house-room. Fares were advanced by the Society, and were almost invariably repaid in full. William Rathbone induced the Select Vestry to press migration under the scheme upon widows with suitable families who applied for outdoor relief, and if it was refused without reasonable cause, to offer the Workhouse. The first result was a considerable saving to the rates. Thus in one year, 1875, it is stated in the Report of the Society that in spite of a diminished demand for labour in the factories, they had been able to send away 174 persons. Out of these, thirteen families had been actually in receipt of relief to the amount of £4 : 12s.

a week, or £240 a year ; many of the remainder would inevitably have become chargeable had they stayed in Liverpool. In their new homes they were all almost from the first entirely and amply self-supporting.

The Parish and the Central Relief Society were brought into close relations over this work, and in 1874 it was arranged, at William Rathbone's suggestion, that an agent from the Central Relief Society should be present three times a week at the Relief Quorums of the Select Vestry, for the purpose of taking over any cases of applicants which seemed more suitable for voluntary charity than for out-door relief. In this way a great number of respectable families, plunged into temporary distress by sickness or some other cause, were prevented from making that first acquaintance with parish relief which so often seems to lead to a permanent loss of self-respect and recurrent pauperism.

He would himself have liked to go much further, to abandon outdoor relief altogether, to hand over to the care of voluntary charity all distress that might be described as accidental and due to unpreventable misfortune, and to deal with the remainder in the Workhouse. This rule would, of course, leave room for endless diversity of opinion as to what constitutes unpreventable misfortune. The number of families who would be reduced by sickness or untoward circumstances to actual desti-

tution if all the adult members were everything that they might be in the way of enterprise, industry, temperance, thrift, good management, etc., is probably exceedingly small. Some Poor Law reformers seem compelled by their principles to allow the poor to suffer the utmost penalty of the deficiency, if they have fallen short of a standard in all these respects far higher than their censors ever dream of imposing on themselves. If William Rathbone had been born a poor man himself, it is easy to imagine with what care and sagacity he would have husbanded his resources and made the utmost of his chances. But in dealing with applications either for charity or poor relief he always inclined to take a lenient view, and to give the applicant the benefit of every reasonable doubt.

He was never, in fact, called upon to formulate in detail his views as to the abolition of outdoor relief, for he felt that opinion in Liverpool was not ripe for such a step, and as usual he preferred to work for what he thought immediately practicable. He therefore contented himself in the Relief Quorum with throwing what influence he possessed always on the side of more thorough investigation of cases and of making relief more adequate when it was given at all.

In 1881, thinking that in the growth of humanitarian, not to say sentimental feeling, the stern lessons taught the country by the utter failure

of the old Poor Law were being forgotten, he procured the republication of the famous Report of the Poor Law Commissioners of 1834.

For permanent improvement in the condition of the poorer classes he looked more to the changes in their habits and aspirations, which a better education and civil freedom were bringing about, than to any system, good or bad, of philanthropy or Poor Law. All the movements originating with the working people themselves for improving the conditions of their labour, or for giving them a fairer share in the prosperity of the capitalist classes, enlisted his eager sympathies. In the early seventies he had been greatly struck with the success of an Edinburgh Building Society, which received money at 4 per cent and lent it out on their workingmen's cottages at 5 per cent, repayable in instalments. He often exhorted working-class audiences to save and invest their savings in similar societies. In order to facilitate this, he felt that there was urgent need for a reform in the land-transfer laws, which would make it as easy to transfer or borrow money upon a house as upon a railway share. It was in the hope of smoothing the way to such a reform, by conciliating the powerful legal interest, that he introduced and carried through the House his Attorneys' and Solicitors' Remuneration Act, which abolished the rule that lawyers must charge for their services according to the length of their docu-

ments and the number of steps taken, and allowed them to make a bargain with their clients. While this Bill was in passage through the House, he received a letter from a respectable working upholsterer, earning 31s. 6d. a week. The man told him that having saved £200, he had invested it in cottage property which seemed to him cheap. He made a bargain with a solicitor to carry out the transfer for him at little more than half the usual rate. But when the solicitor refused to keep to his bargain, he found that he could not legally compel him to do so, but was obliged to pay the full legal charges. These amounted to £30, or 15 per cent on the investment of £200.

The small amount of savings invested by the working classes either in land and houses or in Government stock, as compared with France and other foreign countries, and the smallness of their savings altogether, seemed to him a serious national danger. In 1877, in the midst of the series of bad years that culminated in 1879-80, he read to an audience of working men a paper containing careful calculations and comparisons with other countries upon this point. He pointed out that instead of economising in the bad times that were come upon them, and which were certain to grow worse, the country was consuming far more of everything, and especially of wine and spirits, and that the excess of imports over exports was

increasing by leaps and bounds. In a letter to the *Economist*, called "Waste not, Want not," which attracted so much attention that it had to be reprinted in a special supplement, he dwelt on the same theme in a less popular form. It seemed to him one of the principal defects of the Anglo-Saxon character that it had so little capacity for sacrificing the present to the future, and material things to the attainment of an ideal. On coming into a little money, he said once, an Irishman's first idea is to become the owner of a bit of land, a Welshman's to give his children a better education, but an Englishman's to eat a better dinner. On the whole, this rough generalisation represented a very strong feeling of his. It was what he considered their greater idealism and faith in immaterial things that endeared his Welsh constituents to him, and he was never tired of praising this trait in their character.

Perhaps it must be confessed that a Liverpool man sees the thriftlessness and materialism of his fellow-countrymen at its worst. In Liverpool, Building Societies, Friendly Societies, Co-operative Stores, and all such agencies flourish less than they do in the other great northern cities. That it is so is undoubtedly due to the great amount of casual labour, employed in doing the work of the port under conditions which make thrift, like every other manifestation of an orderly and self-respect-

ing life, not indeed impossible, but as difficult as it can well be made. The bulk of the work of loading and unloading ships, and handling goods on the quays and in the warehouses, requires strength and knack, but it makes very slight call on the intellect. The labourers are engaged and paid by the day or half-day, so that they are under no obligation to turn up regularly. The actual amount of work to be done fluctuates considerably at different seasons of the year, causing some necessary irregularity of employment; but this is made many times greater than it need be owing to the entire lack of system in distributing the labour. Men are engaged at "stands" held simultaneously, close to the ship or by the warehouse where the work is to be done, and as there are thus great numbers of stands, and the men have no means of ascertaining with any exactness the number that will be required at each, there is a huge waste of labour, employers being frequently short of men at one dock while at another not far off hundreds are being turned away idle. Much of the work, especially that on the ships, has to be done at high pressure, and this is met by a great amount of overtime and night-work paid at increased rates. Men frequently work all day and all night too; and periods of two days and two nights consecutively are not uncommon when a ship has to be "turned round" in a short time. Sums of two,

three, and even four pounds in a week can thus be occasionally earned by the pick of the men. It may be doubted if these high earnings do much good even to the individuals who make them. The fame of them, spreading to the country districts, draws in a steady stream of men to press upon the already overcrowded labour-market. Busy weeks are apt to be followed by weeks of comparative idleness, either compulsory or voluntary, and the standard of living, as measured by the money given to the wife for rent, clothes, and housekeeping, tends to fall to the amount earned in the least busy weeks, the balance being spent by the men on drinking, smoking, and betting. The strain which these intermittent spells of unnaturally hard and prolonged work, followed by bouts of idleness and dissipation, impose on the constitutions of the men, wears them out prematurely. Dock labourers are said to be old at forty-five or fifty, and the death-rate and the rate of insanity are both very high among them. In addition to these young men who get the cream of the work, there are great numbers, probably a majority of the whole, who scarcely ever get a full week's work, and whose earnings are equally irregular, but at a much lower level, varying from nothing to fifteen or twenty shillings.

In a town where such conditions prevail in the industry which employs a larger number of adult

men than any two or three other industries, it is natural that agencies for encouraging thrift, as well as all the other usual panaceas of social reformers, should have a hard struggle. The evils of the system spread to other industries. The belief that there are always the docks to fall back upon, and that at the docks neither character, nor intelligence, nor education, nor steady industry, are asked for or needed, smooths the downward course of boys and men in every walk of life.

The above explanation of the conditions which prevail may serve to make clear the allusions in the following letter, written by William Rathbone to his son Ashton in 1883. He had then recently been reading a little book by Mr. Sedley Taylor on Profit Sharing, which gives an interesting account of an experiment made by M. Leclaire, the head of a large Parisian firm of painters and decorators:

18 PRINCES GARDENS, LONDON,
1883.

There is one kind of unselfish work which not only can but ought to be done or initiated by men in active business.

I have never been easy at the relations between merchants and shipowners and the men they employ; and during the strike which took place some time ago in Liverpool of the men who load our ships, and in which (then representing Liverpool) I tried to accommodate matters, I was satisfied it was not a good system for the

employers and a wretched one for the men—unnecessary night-work; excessive work and high wages for the young and strong, all of which combined to make them prematurely old; deficient wages and employment for the men as they grew older, had families, and needed high wages. I don't think the men a bit overpaid, for they work like tigers; but their wages do them no good when high, and fall when they should rise. I talked the matter over with Ismay, and he showed me his wages-list for a steamer; and I talked with others; and though there will undoubtedly be difficulties, there always are in doing anything worth doing. I am satisfied the state of things could be improved if shipowners and employers would do their duty in the matter.

I have often thought that if I was beginning life I would see how far combined interests—co-operation as it is sometimes called—might be made to do more work than it does. A lumpers' company, with the best young master lumper we could find as the managing partner, and the regular men sharing the profits and having a superannuation fund and a sick fund, I am satisfied might be worked if a lot of the shipowners would join in it.

I send you an account of the most successful co-operative experiment I have heard of. The trade is different and more advantageous for it, but the principles might be adapted.

Read it and think it over and show it to Ted. I think it might be applied in a warehouse company. We may talk it over when we meet, as I hope we shall soon.

P.S.—I almost think I should have died happier as Leclaire than any man I remember in modern days.

In later years he came to feel strongly that the problem of casual labour stopped the way, and that no great improvement in the condition of the poor in Liverpool was likely, until the system of employing the labourers had been changed. While on his summer holiday in 1895 he wrote on the subject to Mr. Thomas Ismay, the late senior partner in the firm of Messrs. Ismay, Imrie, and Co., then owners of the White Star Line :

DUNVEGAN CASTLE, ISLE OF SKYE,
August 20, 1895.

I have a very vivid and grateful recollection of the information and advice you so kindly gave me some years ago, when, as representing Liverpool, I came down to try and settle the strikes which were going on.

It is so rare to find men with the pressure of great concerns on their hands who have the faculty and will spare the time to consider labour difficulties from both sides, and who can see the side of the employed as well as their own. Yet they are the only men who can really understand and aid in the settlement of these great questions, on which the prosperity of the country and the character and happiness of the people depend ! We have certainly no one in Liverpool with the same capacity and power to grasp and wisely to settle such a question as you have.

I hope, therefore, you will excuse me if I ask your attention for a short time to some considerations which have been suggested to me, many of which must, I fear, appear to you, and be, crude and unpractical ; for I have now been more than twenty-six years out of actual business, and my experience is therefore much out of date,

as well as vastly inferior, as are my organising ability and judgment, to yours. But it is possible that out of what I may say some practical plan may suggest itself to your experience and wisdom.

I fancy we are all agreed that the present casual labour system of Liverpool is a very defective one, troublesome to the employers and very injurious to the men. The high rate of daily wages as compared with some other places, and the power of earning very large wages by night-work, attracts to Liverpool a larger amount of labour than is needed, even when an average amount of work is going on. Young men, often without families, obtain the preference and these high wages just when they need them least; they waste their strength by over-work and over-indulgence, and then, when prematurely old, with their families needing increased means for education and maintenance, they are themselves pushed aside by a fresh inroad of youth and vigour, and go to swell the ranks of the insufficiently employed or unemployed. It would be far better for them if they could be paid regular wages in proportion to the work they can do, by a classification of labour, such as Burt tells me they have in their part of the world, where one miner is paid and is worth 8s. a day and another 3s. 6d. Of course the young men would appear in the former class, and obtain a higher rate of wages than the older and less capable men; but the latter would continue to be employed at a lower rate equal to "value received."

Again, I think I understood you to say that, by a proper organisation of business, a great part of the night-work might be avoided. If the leading employers, who, as far as I know, are men of honour and conscience, could propose a plan for doing this, public reprobation and con-

tempt might be brought to bear upon those who were destitute of both, so as to make it impossible for them to refuse to unite, where general union would be generally beneficial.

What is to be aimed at appears to me to be, that the minimum amount of labour required at any part of the year should be registered and paid by weekly wages all the year round, and regulated by the wages of the class of labour which the individual was capable of and engaged on; that the surplus only occasionally employed should be registered, so that the residents, if they exerted themselves and were satisfactory, should have precedence, so as not to attract outside labour unnecessarily, and the regular staff would probably be recruited from the best workmen among the registered occasional labour. This has often been suggested; the difficulty is to bring it about. The greatest care would have to be taken that this body did not become a close corporation, and drive work away from the port, as the shipwrights did some years ago; and that the inducement and stimulus to do the work as quickly and as well as it is now done, should be maintained. I quite see that any such plan would have to guard against dangers and difficulties all round; but I have no doubt you have found, as I have, that what people say is "impossible" can be done, when those whose duty it is to organise it set about it; and such assumed impossibilities are often the greatest successes. With Napoleon the First, I have never believed in "that stupid word, *impossible*."

The employer would certainly be benefited by a plan which would prevent or greatly diminish the danger of strikes, and would deal with the difficult question of the unemployed or insufficiently employed. It ought to secure for him also a steadier, more reliable set of men,

and give greater security, and enable him to enjoy the fruits of his labour with a good conscience.

The plan that has suggested itself would be that of an association or company of employers and employed, to undertake the stevedores' and porters' work of the port; to be managed by a board on which employers and employed were represented by equal numbers, with a paid chairman or manager nominated by the committee, or, if the representatives of the two parties could not agree, by, say, Mr. Burt, who has shown himself a conspicuously just and able man, both when leader of the trades-unions and when recently Parliamentary Secretary of the Board of Trade. The constitution would have to be drawn with great care and strictness; and it would have to have as arbitrator a man of first-rate ability and position, say such a man as Sir R. S. Wright, whose decision that anything was contrary to the constitution must be decisive; and if disobeyed, require retirement from the company and forfeiture of all its privileges.

The business of the company would be to undertake the master-porterage, stevedores' work, and general handling of the port work of ships and merchandise of Liverpool. The permanent men would be paid weekly throughout the year, and all the profits of the master-porterage, etc., would be divided between employers and employed on such terms as might be agreed upon. One part of the share coming to the employed would go to form a reserve fund for sickness and old-age pensions. Of course there would be the difficulty of the older men coming in to any such arrangement on terms that would ensure the solvency of the society. But I think it would be wise and right for men, who have benefited and hope to benefit by their connection with the trade of Liverpool,

to start the fund with a sufficient capital to secure its soundness and safety, and to give a visible inducement to the working men to join. This would prevent unfairness to the younger men, who would then build up a sufficient fund to provide for themselves. Arrangements would have to be made to enable the men to retire on fair terms if they were to leave Liverpool for other fields of labour.

It would be necessary for such a plan to interest the leaders of labour, the secretaries of the trade-unions, and to argue the matter out face to face with the workmen, and show them their interest in a better system. From my experience with them, however, the most powerful motive with them would be an appeal to their loyalty and duty to their fellow-workmen. We know how powerful a motive that is by the way they will often go on strike, against their own opinion and interest, to support a strike with which they do not agree, and which is not even in their own neighbourhood or their own special department of labour; and the way in which they always contribute in cases of sickness and accident, and often share their last meal with a man poorer than themselves. Of course it would be difficult, but I do not think impossible, to secure at least equal energy and carefulness in work to that which—to do them justice—I believe Liverpool stevedores and porters now bestow on their work. To judge from experience: where men, whether as clerks or workmen, have an interest in their work, they value and take a pride in it far beyond what the financial gain to them would lead us to expect, and are more intolerant and severe upon idle and scamped work than even their overseers are or can be.

Many years ago I was very much struck by the wonderful success of the painting, decorating, and

plumbing business of the Maison Leclaire, Paris. Circumstances, of course, are very different, and much more difficult to deal with in casual and less highly paid labour than the skilled labour employed by the Maison Leclaire ; but since I read the account, many years ago, I have watched many undertakings commenced on the same principle, and have always thought that the principle might be in some degree adapted to deal with the present problem.

It will, however, undoubtedly require very great care to work out and guard such an undertaking, and I should value most highly your advice respecting it. I could send the account of Leclaire, if you liked and had time to look it over.

Some correspondence followed with Mr. Ismay and with some other leading shipowners, to whom William Rathbone also wrote on the subject, and on two occasions they met at dinner at Greenbank to discuss it. All, without exception, seemed agreed that the existing system was unsatisfactory to the employers and demoralising to the men, but none seemed to see their way clear to a safe remedy, or willing to make the first move, and as William Rathbone saw clearly that nothing could be done unless the motion came from within the ranks of either employers or employed, the matter fell to the ground.

Another class of workers with whose lot William Rathbone actively concerned himself were the railway employees. For many years, I believe over twenty, he acted as honorary referee or

arbitrator for the men's Provident and Insurance Club of the London and North-Western Railway, deciding on disputed claims for compensation. The work was both troublesome and costly, for he always took counsel's opinion upon it, and the cases had a way of coming in, as all such intermittent tasks are apt to do, just at the times when he could least conveniently attend to them. But they were often full of human interest, and however small the sums involved, he spared neither time nor pains to arrive at a just decision.

What seems greatly to have struck those who talked with him in his later years about the subjects treated on in this chapter was the freshness and breadth of his way of looking at them. Often, no doubt, he showed himself out of touch with the best-accredited modern opinions, either because he did not agree with them, or, much more often, because his absorption in other work had prevented him from keeping his knowledge up to date. But he never left one with the impression, as so many elderly men do, that his mind was so saturated with the conceptions and opinions acquired in youth that it had become quite incapable of taking in a new idea. On the contrary, it was plain that if any one in whose judgment he had confidence were to bring before him a promising and well-planned scheme on lines altogether different from those he had before conceived, he was quite capable of throwing

himself into it with all the enthusiasm and hopefulness, and perhaps rather less than more than all the caution, of his early manhood.

It was upon questions of social reform that his public speaking was heard at its best. It has been said before that he was not, on the whole, a good speaker. But sometimes on the modest occasion of the annual meeting of some public charity, or a gathering of penny-bank workers, or the annual dinner of a trade club,—occasions when most men give themselves up unashamed to a flow of platitudes,—his speaking had all the effect of opening a window and letting in air and sunshine upon a stuffy room. His very appearance on the platform, his eager look, and the ring in his voice, recalled the slumbering audience to a consciousness of the vital human needs that lay behind the dull mechanism of charity or thrift, as in clear, strong sentences, few and fit, and aglow with the fire of his enthusiasm, he spoke out of the experience of a lifetime of the principles and methods that should guide their work.

CHAPTER XI

PARLIAMENTARY WORK—1881 TO 1895

When William Rathbone returned to the House of Commons after a session's absence, it was with good hopes of being able to get through some substantial work at his favourite subjects before old age obliged him to lay down his tools. He was refreshed by his holiday and encouraged by the warm reception he met with from his friends in the House, as well as from members whom he scarcely knew as friends. Men whom he had hardly spoken to came up and shook him warmly by the hand, and "We are so glad to see you back in your right place again" was, he wrote to his wife, the usual form of greeting.

There seemed at first sight every reason to expect that the Parliament would be an active one, which would accomplish at last some of the domestic reforms that had been waited for so long. The new House of Commons included an unusual number of men of ability and varied experience.

Sir Erskine May told William Rathbone that he had never known a House that contained so many men of high reputation at the Universities. The Liberal party had a large majority. The Government was exceptionally able and representative, and above all it had at its head, after an eclipse of seven years, Mr. Gladstone. But the Parliament of 1880 was destined to belie all hopes. From the beginning it was beset by difficulties that were an inheritance from its predecessors, and difficulties that began with itself. Not legislation, nor even the attempt to legislate, occupied its time, so much as the affairs of South Africa, Afghanistan, and Egypt, the Bradlaugh episode, and the obstructions of the Fourth Party and the Irish Party. Yet though very little was accomplished, late hours and all-night sittings put a heavy strain on members who took their duties seriously and obeyed the party Whips. The futility and fruitlessness of the long sittings were very trying to the temper and morale of the House, and gradually broke down its discipline. William Rathbone noted that whereas in former years no member who took an active part in the business of the House would have thought of accepting an invitation to dinner on a Government night, or even on a private members' night, until he knew what was coming on, in this Parliament no such restrictions were observed.

He remained in the House of Commons

throughout this and the three succeeding Parliaments. But though in the years of comparative tranquillity that lay between the rejection of the first Home Rule Bill and the introduction of the second, he witnessed some valuable legislation, and took an active part in not a little of it, he never found Parliament again what it had been during his first eleven years there. This may have been partly due to his advancing years. But he accounted for it much more by a real change in the status and opportunities for usefulness open to private members. The growth of obstruction and the restrictions on debate introduced to repress it, as well as the congestion of business which it intensified, all contributed to accelerate the process which had begun long before—of the encroachment by the Executive on the function, which originally belonged and still belongs in name to the whole House, of initiating legislation. "Government business" now absorbs nearly the whole working time of the House, and under the rules which govern the disposal of the remnant, practically no Bill introduced by private members, unless it is afforded special facilities by Government, can ever pass through all its stages and become law. William Rathbone would have cared little for this if there had been a greater abundance of Government measures dealing with the questions of administrative reform and social wellbeing which he had so much at heart,

and if he had found that the forms of the House gave him, and others like him, more scope for helping, by diligent work and legitimate influence, to make the provisions of such legislation more effective and better directed.

As it was, many of the questions which in the seventies had been felt to be so pressing that it seemed scarcely possible that public opinion would allow their solution to be delayed any longer, remained for years untouched, and when some of them were at last dealt with by the Conservative Government the scope of their measures, as might have been expected, usually fell short of what Liberals and social reformers like William Rathbone and his friends desired. Men interested in special measures must accept from their opponents less than they might have hoped to get from their own leaders. Nevertheless, measures such as the Local Government Acts of 1888 and 1893, and the Welsh Intermediate Education Act of 1889, though not a perfect fulfilment of hopes long deferred, yet gave much for which to be thankful. There were many other much-desired reforms which, after seeming to come within reach, and even after attaining such prospect of fruition as is implied by inclusion among measures promised in the Queen's Speech, remain to this day unaccomplished, and, without having been discredited by fresh argument or fact, have ceased to inspire

enthusiasm, and have even lost their hold upon the public interest. Much of the work of the private member during these weary Parliaments consisted in vain efforts, session after session, to strengthen the force of opinion behind desired reforms by struggling to introduce resolutions and secure debates upon them, or by dragging them, embodied in Bills, a little way up the hill of legislation, in the hope that if this were done persistently and successfully enough, the Government would at length be induced to hitch them on to their own car, if only for the sake of getting them finally off the road. Although the rules of debate were more than once altered for the purpose of checking obstruction, the machinery of actual legislation—the arrangements for drafting Bills and the stages through which they have to pass—remained in essentials as clumsy and ineffective as it had always been.[1]

His own work during the rest of his parliamentary life was to a large extent a continuation of activities begun before. Local government, licensing, bankruptcy reforms, and commercial law generally, continued to absorb a good deal of his attention, and the scope of his views on these has already been sufficiently indicated. Among the fresh subjects which the interests of his Welsh constituency had led him to make his own, the most thoroughly congenial was that of Welsh education.

[1] See Chap. VII. pp. 226-230.

In 1880 a Departmental Committee had been appointed, at the suggestion of Sir Hugh Owen, to inquire into the state of intermediate and higher education in Wales, and in 1881, within a year of their appointment, they completed an exhaustive investigation and brought out their Report. More unusual even than this celerity was the fruitfulness of their labours. Unlike the reports of most parliamentary commissions, their main recommendations were all in the course of some ten years carried into effect. These amounted to a complete scheme of intermediate and higher education. There was first to be a system of secondary schools, supported from four sources—a county rate not exceeding a halfpenny, a Government grant, voluntary subscriptions, and endowments. The endowments available for educational purposes were pronounced to be, as compared with those of England, very few and of small value. Next, two University Colleges were recommended, one for North and one for South Wales, each to receive an annual grant from Government of £4000. Lastly, there was to be a University for Wales. All these proposals are now accomplished facts. The history of the Colleges and of the University, as far as William Rathbone was concerned in it, has been told already. In 1883 a Bill for Welsh Intermediate Education was prepared by Mr. Mundella, and in 1884 it was named among the measures promised

in the Queen's Speech. But just as it was about to be introduced, the rejection by the House of Lords of the Franchise Bill put a stop to all further progress. The difficulties of getting any Bill through the Parliaments of the early eighties seemed indeed almost unsurmountable. Another consideration which appears to have discouraged the Welsh members from pushing the matter as energetically as they might otherwise have done was a doubt whether the Welsh people themselves would welcome the Bill when they realised that it involved a rate. How this doubt was dispelled by the enthusiasm of the people is described in a letter written to William Rathbone long afterwards by Professor Henry Jones, then one of the staff of the newly founded North Wales College, and an early and zealous pioneer in the cause of Welsh education :

ABERGELE, N.W., *July* 31, 1899.

Your letter does not touch upon the movement for improving the schools in Wales. I have no time at present to enter upon it at any length, but there is one little pleasant fact which I should like to recall to your memory.

You have not forgotten, I am sure, how long the Intermediate Education Bill remained a mere Bill, how the passing of it into an Act was postponed from year to year, and how some of the less patient outsiders, like myself, could not guess what the reasons were. You revealed them to me one evening at Treborth. You were going to speak for Mr. Richard

Davies, I think at Llangefni. And on my asking why you did not take up Intermediate Education, you replied that you were assured by the Welsh M.P.'s that the moment the Welsh people realised that a *rate* was involved they would reject it; and that *this* was the reason why the Bill was held back. I ventured to disagree with this opinion; and after dinner was over you took me into a little room, and we two then discussed the matter thoroughly: I, vouching with all my heart and soul that if the question were frankly put as between the rate and better education, the Welsh people would choose the rate; and you, on your part, resolving to put the matter to the test on the morrow. About 11 P.M. that night, on making this resolve, you turned me out of the room, and began to put together notes for a speech on Intermediate Education, instead of the one you had intended giving on some political topic.

From the meeting on the morrow you came straight to the College, and I remember yet how your face beamed with joy as you told me on the College stair of the successful meeting. The people surpassed your most ardent expectations then, as they did afterwards in the whole matter.

The meeting here alluded to was held in 1885. It was followed by a number of meetings held in all parts of the country to demand the Bill. Professor Henry Jones spoke at many of them, and in every one he placed the choice of a rate or no Intermediate Education Bill before the audience, asking for a show of hands. In every case the rate was carried with absolute unanimity

and almost acclamation. Petitions were showered upon the Government from School Boards, Town Councils, and public bodies and gatherings of all sorts. Towards the end of the session the Bill was introduced, but the dissolution put a stop to its further progress. During Mr. Gladstone's short administration of 1886 nothing was thought of but the Irish question, and when Mr. Mundella went with the rest of the Liberal Government out of office, Welsh education lost its most influential advocate.

From the Opposition benches, however, Mr. Mundella continued to work for the Bill and, in common with all the Welsh members without distinction of party, to press it upon the Conservative Government. At length, in 1889, Sir William Hart Dyke yielded to their united representations and consented to adopt, though with considerable modifications, the Bill which had been introduced by the Welsh Liberal members, and to push it forward as a Government measure. The way to this concession had been smoothed by the County Council Act of 1888, which provided a popularly elected body to decide whether a rate should be levied or not, and also "made easy the constitution of governing bodies on which the ratepayers could be adequately represented, without having recourse to the method of direct election, which had been opposed by many as unsuited to the case."[1] In

[1] *Special Reports: Education Department*, vol. ii.

all the negotiations which led to the final success, William Rathbone took an active and, in the opinion of some of those who worked with him, a very influential share.

The Bill became law in August 1889. Its provisions, although merely permissive, were with extraordinary celerity put into operation all over Wales, and in a few years the country was provided with a system of schools more complete and better co-ordinated than can be found in any other part of the United Kingdom.

A few other scattered incidents of William Rathbone's parliamentary life during these years may be recorded.

In 1881 he was asked to move an amendment to the motion of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, condemning the Government for restoring the independence of the Transvaal. He had been one of those who held that the Liberal Government, when it came into office, ought to have acted upon its known conviction that annexation had been a mistake, and to have withdrawn at once from the country. He could not therefore defend their first decision to remain, but as a steady believer, like Mr. Bright, in the doctrine that the moral law is intended not only for individuals but for the life and practice of States in their dealings with one another, he could with all his heart uphold their refusal to go to war in defence of an admitted

wrong. Of his speech he wrote afterwards to his wife: "Lord Kimberley and others were very complimentary about my defence of him." Many years afterwards, in what was to prove almost his last public appearance, he repeated some of the substance of this speech in unveiling a bust of Mr. Gladstone at the Liverpool Reform Club.

He attributed what he held to be the original blunder of the annexation to the fact that Sir Michael Hicks-Beach had not been long enough at the Colonial Office to have learnt his work, and had thus been too dependent on the information of Sir Bartle Frere and the other men on the spot. This seemed to him a signal instance of a defect in the practical working of the English Cabinet system about which he felt and often spoke strongly. In forming administrations, offices are usually distributed among the men whom it is desired to bring into the Government in the order of their supposed dignity and importance, with little regard to the knowledge or special fitness of each for the work of the department to which he is assigned. That a man should have done well in a particular department, is held to give him some claim to be transferred to one of greater dignity. He has no sooner thoroughly mastered his work than he is moved on, and the whole of the knowledge and experience which he has accumulated are wasted. During the Parliament of 1874 to 1880, Sir

Michael Hicks-Beach, as Chief Secretary for Ireland, had presided for three years over a Parliamentary Committee to inquire into the local government and taxation of towns in Ireland. The members of the Committee, of whom William Rathbone was one, had been greatly impressed by the ability, impartiality, and devotion to his work which he had then shown, and had confidently expected that the conclusions of the Committee would be embodied in a liberal measure of local self-government for Ireland. His appointment to the Colonial Office had dashed these hopes to the ground, besides having for South Africa and the Empire far more wide-spreading and disastrous results. I do not know which of the Conservative Cabinet it was who furnished William Rathbone with a favourite story *à propos* of this practice. The statesman in question was notified that Disraeli wished to move him from the Local Government Board to the Board of Trade. He protested that he was just beginning to understand a little about local government, and knew nothing whatever about trade. Disraeli drawled indifferently: "Well, it doesn't matter. I suppose you know as much about trade as ——" (the First Lord of the Admiralty) "does about ships."

One of the pleasantest parts of his work in the sessions of 1882 to 1884 was that concerned with Mr. James Tuke's scheme of emigration from the

congested districts of the west of Ireland to America. About this work he says :

The money was first found by private subscription, and managed by a Committee consisting of Mr. W. H. Smith, who was Chairman ; Mr. W. E. Forster, then, I think, Irish Secretary ; Mr. Whitbread, the Duke of Bedford, myself and others ; with Mr. Sydney Buxton and Mr. Howard Hodgkin as Honorary Secretaries—and admirable secretaries they were. When the work was thoroughly organised, and we had spent about £3000, we applied to Government and proposed that they should give a sum per head per emigrant, less than the minimum cost of emigrating any one, and that the Committee should find the remainder, large or small, of the actual cost in each case. This arrangement left the results of economy or extravagance to be borne entirely by the funds which we ourselves found or raised, and gave every inducement for the utmost care. The sum we raised supplementing the Government aid emigrated some 11,000 people, and not only materially relieved the pressure on the districts from which they came, but caused still more material relief from the sums remitted home by the emigrants to bring out their families and friends.

After sitting for two years, the agitation raised against the work of the Committee by the Nationalist party and by the Catholic clergy in Ireland caused them to suspend operations. William Rathbone was also a shareholder in Mr. Parnell's rival scheme of "migration," *i.e.* of transferring families to the more fertile parts of Ireland, and

establishing them in holdings formed out of lands hitherto held in pasturage. Nothing ever came of this proposal. The £50,000 assigned by Government in aid of it was left untouched, while the £50,000 allotted to the Tuke scheme was spent in full.

In 1884, on the retirement of Mr. Speaker Brand, William Rathbone was asked to second the nomination of Mr. Peel to fill the Speaker's Chair. I have been told by experienced members that his selection for this duty as well as for that of moving the amendment already alluded to on the question of the Transvaal, marks the position which he had gained as a representative of the best and soberest opinion of the unofficial members of his party.

During the barren years of this Parliament, when little was to be done in the House except to spend there half the day and nearly all the night, he found time to write a good many articles and pamphlets. Two articles in the *Fortnightly* were upon the reform of parliamentary business in the Commons and in the Lords. The second was really a scheme for the reform of the House of Lords itself, and was reprinted, at Sir Thomas Acland's suggestion, in 1884. A pamphlet published in America, and entitled *Protection and Communism*, argued that the tariff system of the States was responsible for the greater inequality of wages there and for the more violent fluctuations in com-

mercial prosperity.[1] Two articles in the *Nineteenth Century*, on Local Government, described the existing chaos and suggested the lines of reform.[2] An article on Great Britain and the Suez Canal, in the *Fortnightly*, was intended to correct the exaggerated popular estimate of the importance to Great Britain of keeping control of the Canal. It showed that the effect of the Canal had not been to increase but to diminish the commercial predominance of England. Before the Canal, England had been the centre from which the products of the East were distributed all over Europe. Now they were carried direct to the ports of the Mediterranean. A comparison was also drawn between the Cape route to the East and the route through the Canal, and it was argued that with modern swift transports, the length of the former route was not prohibitive, and in time of war would be more than compensated by its greater safety.

To an address delivered at the annual prize-giving of the Liverpool Institute in 1884 he gave the not very happy title of "Success." "The moral conditions of efficiency" would be a truer if clumsier description of its purport. It was, in fact, an attempt to set down, in a form suitable for school-boys, the lessons which life had taught him as to the principles of conduct which will enable a man to get the most out of himself and do the

[1] See p. 103. [2] See pp. 234-245.

most for his generation. This is assumed to be the goal of every one's endeavour : " To leave the world something better than we found it—each of us can do that, and that is Success."

The Redistribution Act of 1885 divided William Rathbone's constituency into two—North Carnarvonshire or Arfon, and South Carnarvonshire or Eivion. As the member in possession, he had his choice, and he selected Arfon, estimated to be the less safe of the two seats. In neither of them was there, in fact, much danger of defeat, and in the General Election of the following year he defeated his opponent, Colonel Platt, by over 1700 votes.

The announcement of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule policy soon eclipsed all other issues. William Rathbone was one of those who found it very difficult to make up their minds upon the question so suddenly forced to a practical issue. He had always been in favour of giving a generous measure of local self-government to Ireland, as a remedy for the congestion of public business at Westminster, as well as a concession to national sentiment. But the grant of a separate Parliament seemed to him beset with difficulties and dangers, and he would have preferred not to take so momentous a step till other means of conciliation had first been tried. But the events of 1885 and 1886 had almost or quite destroyed his hopes that lesser

concessions would avail. After the Conservatives had fought a general election in alliance with the Nationalists and had without protest allowed it to be generally thought and said that they were contemplating some form of national Parliament, and after Mr. Gladstone had definitely committed himself to the same policy, it seemed to him useless to expect that the Irish would be content with a mere system of local government with a central board.

Both in the Government of Ireland Bill and the Land Purchase Bill as first introduced he saw many defects. He specially objected to the financial proposals of the Bill, and in a speech in the House, which attracted a good deal of attention, he pointed out that there was no provision against extravagant expenditure and the contraction of unlimited debt by local authorities. The Irish people were entirely inexperienced in self-government, either local or national, and had formed extravagant expectations of the material benefits which they would derive from the Bill. If, in process of gaining their experience, they were allowed to plunge the country into insolvency, England would not only lose the loans promised in the Land Purchase Bill, but would ultimately have to come to the rescue of the poorer country. After other criticisms, he argued that the whole question was being too much hurried. It had taken America two years to

frame her constitution, and it was improbable that the best possible constitution for Ireland could be devised in less than two months.

It was a time when every vote was of importance and the utterances of every member, especially of every member who was known to be still undecided, were closely scrutinised. Many of William Rathbone's Unionist acquaintances thought the tenor of his speech so hostile to the Bill, that they confidently expected him to join the band of seceders from the Liberal party, and were proportionately bitter when they saw that he had voted for the second reading of the Bill. The most charitable explanation offered for his supposed inconsistency described it as a result of personal devotion to Mr. Gladstone. To desert Mr. Gladstone's banner would no doubt have given him pain, but he proved seven years later that he could do so when he thought it right. As a matter of fact, there was no inconsistency. He had embodied his objections in a memorandum, with suggestions drawn up in consultation, I believe, with Sir R. S. Wright, and had sent it to the Government. On the morning of the division he received a message from Mr. Gladstone to the effect that he had looked at the memorandum, and that in his speech that night he intended to give an assurance that the Government were willing to consider suggestions on all points not infringing on the

five essential principles laid down by him in introducing the Bill. Mr. Gladstone did give this assurance, and he also stated that the Government intended to withdraw the Bill and introduce a new one. William Rathbone accordingly voted for the second reading as an assertion of the general principle that a large measure of self-government should be passed for Ireland. The Government were defeated in the division, and the General Election of 1886 laid the question to rest for some years.

The majority of William Rathbone's constituents proved strong Home Rulers. They remained loyal to their member; but some of the ardent spirits among them were disposed to be discontented that he had not given a more unhesitating and unqualified support to the Irish Bill. He took great pains to meet their criticisms and make clear his views, but he was as uncompromising as he had shown himself while member for Liverpool in asserting his position as a representative, not a delegate. At one of his meetings, the feeling of the malcontents was expressed in the baldest form by the question: "Are you prepared to pledge yourself to support Mr. Gladstone and his Government, when it is the desire and wish of the majority of the constituency, and when that is not in harmony with your own opinion?" He replied:

I have valued the representation of this constituency especially because I feel that on all great questions of religious and political liberty, and progress, and the rights of the great mass of the people to legislation affecting their welfare, I am entirely in accord and in agreement with my constituents ; and that, therefore, I can honestly, truly, and efficiently represent you. If, at any time, in your opinion, I have ceased so to represent you, it will be your duty, without any consideration of kindness or friendship for me, to give expression to that opinion in the way pointed out by the Constitution at the polls, and to dismiss me from the honourable position of your representative. If I cease to represent you thus truly, I could no longer consent to be your representative ; but when I am asked whether I am prepared to vote against my own opinion, or pledge myself as to my vote on measures which I have never seen, at the bidding of any one, I must distinctly and decidedly say—Never.

The year 1888 was probably one of the busiest of his life, and the two or three years which followed it were scarcely less crowded. It was very characteristic of his high courage in facing work that at the beginning of this year, on the eve of the introduction of the Local Government Bill, when he knew that the question which had been the main interest of his political life was at length about to be dealt with in Parliament, he deliberately accepted the duties of honorary secretary to the informal Committee, consisting of the three trustees and himself, which prepared the

ground for the foundation of the Queen's Jubilee Institute, and so brought upon himself a mass of work which most men of sixty-nine would have thought more than arduous enough without any other occupation. The work accomplished by this ideal Committee, which never met, has already been described.[1] Family recollections of the two sessions which followed recall an atmosphere of incessant work, when the head of the house was popularly supposed to be practising the art of dictating three letters at once, and was little visible on week-days except at meals, to which he came accompanied by a secretary, a typist or two, and a fellow-enthusiast on nursing matters, with whom he continued to hold eager conference.

Since the Home Rule Bill of 1885, William Rathbone had paid special attention to the Irish land question. When Mr. Balfour introduced the Irish Land Purchase Bill of 1890-91, he made a great effort to induce him to limit the sales to *bona fide* peasant holdings. It was generally admitted that he made out a very strong case. He procured and circulated elaborate tables of figures which showed that eight-ninths of the holdings in Ireland were of the yearly value of £30 and under. The total number of these smaller holdings could be purchased for a sum considerably smaller than that which would be

[1] See p. 180.

required to purchase the remaining one-ninth. In the sales made under the Ashbourne Acts from 1885 to 1890, two-thirds of the money advanced had been spent on purchasing some 3000 of the holdings above £30, while one-third had sufficed to purchase 10,000 of the holdings under £30. This showed that if the larger holdings were to be allowed to share the benefits of the present Act they would swallow up the greater part of the money. And who would benefit, he asked the House? The result would be that these larger tenants, "as soon as they become owners, will at once want to set up as landlords, and live on the margin between the reduced rents they will have to pay and the excessive rents which the intense greed for the possession of land which exists in Ireland will enable them to exact." And this meant creating, before many years were out, "the greatest curse of Irish landowners—the small grinding squireen landlord." Mr. Balfour would not consent to exclude the larger tenants altogether from the Bill, but he introduced a clause giving to the smaller holdings some sort of preference. In execution the whole of this Act proved to have been too much hedged round with precautions intended to safeguard the Imperial grants, and it has been little used.

In the General Election of 1892, William Rathbone was returned unopposed. When the Home

Rule Bill of 1893 was introduced, he at first liked it much better than he had done the earlier Bill. But he was one of the handful of his party who finally fell away upon the question which proved the crux of this, as of the former Bill—the question of the relation of the Irish representatives to the Imperial Parliament. The Bill of 1885 had excluded them altogether. According to the Bill of 1892, as first drafted, eighty representatives from Ireland were to be included, but were not to vote on questions affecting exclusively English or Scotch affairs. This plan met with such general disfavour in the House that Mr. Gladstone reluctantly abandoned it, and resorted to the third possible course, their inclusion for all purposes. William Rathbone felt this plan to be unworkable. For the theoretic injustice of permitting the Irish to meddle in our affairs, while we were forbidden to meddle in theirs, he as usual cared comparatively little. But he believed that the plan would impoverish and stultify the Parliament in Dublin, and would destroy all hope of finality in the settlement, by offering the Irish an irresistible temptation to harass British legislation in order to extort fresh concessions. Hearing that he intended to withdraw his support of the Bill, Mr. Gladstone gave proof of his indefatigable energy and tenacity in keeping hold upon the allegiance of his followers. In the midst of the great strain of the debates in

the Committee stage of the Bill he found time to write him two letters, and finally made an appointment with him, and argued the point for more than an hour. His main contention was that as the inclusion of the Irish representatives had been granted solely to satisfy the House of Commons, and had never been asked for by the Irish representatives themselves, it would be cruel and unjust to deny self-government to the country on the ground of that single objection. William Rathbone had been a follower of Mr. Gladstone in Parliament for twenty-three years, and in that time had only twice voted against him on measures of first-class importance. It was painful to him to resist pressure like this. But Mr. Gladstone's arguments did not convince his judgment, and he had no real hesitation. He would not vote against the third reading; but he could neither vote nor pair in favour of it. He remained in the country with his family to make his defection less marked.

In 1895, his last session in the House, he was one of a good many Liberals, some of them like himself specially interested in temperance, who did their best to prevent the ill-timed and futile introduction of Sir William Harcourt's Local Veto Bill. In an interview with one of the principal leaders of the temperance party he summed up the probable effects of introducing the Bill in a prophecy every part of which has come true: "Public opinion,"

he said, "is not ready for the Bill. If you insist on bringing it forward you will bring about a reaction all over the country. If the Bill gets through the Commons it is certain to be rejected in the Lords. At the General Election you will have the trade solid against you, and the majority of the public will side with the trade. The defeat of the party will be more certain than it is already, and it will be severer than it would otherwise be. Sir William Harcourt will lose his seat, and you will have put back the cause of temperance for years." The temperance leader admitted that his people had no hope of being able to pass the Bill, but said that they were pledged to their followers to bring it in. "Then," said William Rathbone in an unusual outburst, "if you do what you know will harm your cause to please your followers, you are greater cowards than I took you for."

For more than a year before the dissolution of June 1895 he had resolved not to seek election in another Parliament, and when the time came to carry out his decision he felt no disposition to regret it. Parliamentary work had long been unsatisfactory to him, and during his last two sessions his dissatisfaction had increased. Although he was on friendly terms with his colleagues—the Welsh Liberal members—there was, in his belief, an increasing tendency among them to pursue a policy of which he thoroughly disapproved—the

policy of forming into a group or cave, and trying to extort the measures they desired for Wales from the Liberal leaders by the continual menace of rebellion. This tendency seemed to him likely, if persisted in, to destroy all that was best and most characteristic in the British parliamentary system, and to bring about the evils associated with the "group system" in France. He uttered his protest; but he was now seventy-six, and he felt that the fortunes of the future were with younger men. His relations with his constituents had never been more cordial than during the later years of his representation of Arfon; and had he chosen to stand again, he was assured that he would be returned unopposed. He had come there a stranger, unable to base a claim to connection with the Principality on nationality, or language, or even, as so many of his fellow-townsmen could have done, upon the possession of a country house within its bounds. During the fourteen years of his representation the strong national feeling of the Welsh had been growing,—if not stronger,—more articulate and even aggressive in its expression. The cry of Wales for the Welsh was heard with increasing frequency, and with ever new applications—Welsh members for Welsh constituencies, Welsh professors and scholars for Welsh colleges, special parliamentary treatment, without regard to the "predominant partner," for every Welsh

problem. Yet William Rathbone's typically Welsh constituency, of country gentry, quarrymen, and farmers and small townspeople, had treated him from the first with kindness and cordiality, and as time went on with, perhaps one may say, growing confidence and affection. Of this they gave the best proof by allowing him the freedom he asked for to vote and speak, not uninfluenced by their wishes, but unfettered by election pledges, and in the last event according to his own conscience and judgment. He was grateful to them for their forbearance, and in his last address to them he ventured—now that it could not be thought that he had any personal interest to serve—to appeal to them more than once to extend to other aliens the same tolerance that they had shown to him, and to press into the service of their politics, their education, and every other department of their national life, the best men that they could find, irrespective of class, nationality, or creed.

He had been in the habit of making the annual meeting of the Arfon Liberal Association the occasion for his principal yearly speech to his constituents. In the January following his retirement, he attended this annual meeting for the last time, to receive an address and presentation from the members of the Association. The presentation took the form of a magnificent silver bowl. Mrs. Rathbone received a handsome pearl

bracelet. The addresses presented and the speeches made upon such occasions are perhaps an equivocal source of biography, but one quotation may be permitted:

We believe it is due to you and men of a like disinterested character that Wales has held so high a position in Parliament, and has been able to place her claims for special legislation so prominently forward; and we further believe that had it been possible for you to continue to advocate her cause in the future, as in the past, our best hopes would have the sooner approached realisation. Your services to the cause of education, in which the Principality was very much behindhand when you came amongst us, are so great that they are apt to eclipse all else you have done for and been to us. We are glad therefore of this opportunity of publicly recording how deeply sensible we are of your unswerving loyalty to the great cause of progress generally. Your services to the principles of local self-government in collecting and arranging facts and statistics have been invaluable to the Government and country, and have materially assisted in the success of recent legislation. Your long and intimate association with Ireland, and sympathy and knowledge of Irish character, helped and guided public opinion and Parliament in dealing with the Home Rule Bill, and the other important Bills which have already become the law of the land, and have proved of so much material benefit to the wellbeing of our sister island. . . . But above all that you have done for us, either publicly or privately, which in this humble manner we have so inadequately endeavoured to recognise, you have ever set us the noble example of how truly to live

for others, and how to devote the powers and opportunities God may have endowed us with for the welfare and benefit of those around us.

This scene brought to a final close his relations with his constituents as such. But the severance was limited to political affairs. In matters educational he was, and remained for the rest of his working life, in as close touch as ever with his many Welsh friends and colleagues.[1] In 1892 he had been made President of the North Wales College, and in 1897 he was re-elected for a further term of five years—a term he was not destined to be able to complete. The post was no sinecure, for though his attendances were not regular, he was generally to be found at Bangor when any new step important to the future of the College was in contemplation ; and in the interval he was in frequent correspondence with the Principal, Mr. Reichel, and the other friends of the College. He was also a member of the Court of the University of Wales, which held its meetings at Shrewsbury. In addition to this work, his plans for intermediate and technical education, and in especial, the expenditure of a sum of money which he and his friend,

[1] Among those colleagues who both before and after his political retirement made his work easier by keeping him in touch with local conditions and by constant help and advice, I may perhaps be allowed to mention Mr. Arthur Darbishire, Mr. Charles Darbishire, Mr. D. P. Williams of Llanberis, for long chairman of his election-Committee, Mr. Cadwaladr Davies, and his election agent, Mr. R. D. Williams.

Sir Henry Tate, had jointly contributed to help forward the organisation of technical education in Carnarvonshire, involved him in an immense correspondence. Attendance to these various Welsh interests indeed formed a very considerable share of the work of his remaining years.

CHAPTER XII

RELIGION AND THE AFFAIRS OF RELIGION

"The work that remains for this and the next generation of Unitarians is to hold up before the world the clear signs of a genuine religious enthusiasm ; to possess spiritual aspirations that rise into toil and sacrifice as their natural sphere ; a practical devotion to God and Christ and the heavenly kingdom upon earth, in combination with a large and reconciling truth, with freedom and with love. This is the work that remains to supplement and to glorify all our controversies."—*Sermon preached by the Rev. J. H. Thom to the younger men and women of Renshaw Street Chapel*, 1854.

THE strong influence exercised on William Rathbone by his brother-in-law and the minister of his chapel, Mr. Thom, has been mentioned in an earlier chapter. To those who knew them both, the traces of this influence seem visible throughout the whole fabric of the younger man's life and work, in the spirit and methods of his business, politics, and philanthropy, in his habits of life and ways of thought and expression. But these traces are naturally most evident in matters of personal religion and in work connected with the religious body to which he belonged. His doctrinal views,

so far as he ever defined them, were mainly those of the school of Unitarianism represented by Mr. Thom and Mr. Channing,[1] but they also contained elements drawn from the Quaker traditions of his family. Except in their broadest aspects, however, and in their bearing on the spiritual life and on character, the problems of theology did not greatly interest him. There were in particular two articles of his faith of which he often spoke in intimate moments to those with whom he had influence. One was the Quaker doctrine of "the inward light," or, as it is sometimes called, of "immediate inspiration." The other was a belief, which those who belong to his denomination are very commonly supposed to deny or ignore—in the leadership and sovereignty of Christ. It is often said about Unitarians that they reduce the figure of the Founder of Christianity to a level with that of other great prophets and saints. This may be true of many of the members of a body one of whose chief bonds it is that they object to any dogma or body of dogmas being made the basis of religious fellowship. But of Mr. Thom, and his leader Channing, and of most of the prominent Unitarians of their day, it is very far indeed from being true. Mr. Thom had been brought up as an Arian, and although in his maturity he advanced to a position remoter from

[1] The Rev. William E. Channing, of Boston, U.S.A (1780-1842).

current orthodoxy than Arianism, and seems tacitly to have rejected the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ, as well as of his deity, of the miraculous conditions of his coming, and of the juridical aspect of the atonement, it was only to concentrate his gaze with a more passionate intensity upon the vision of him as the archetype of humanity, the manifestation at once of the character of God and of God's standard for man. Christ was to him

> a revelation not of the divine life of angels, but of the divine life in man, of the fulness of the stature of a perfect man, of the harmony of holiness and grace, of tenderness and righteousness, that would be the natural life of human nature if our development was of God, if we were filial and obedient, and suffered the Father to sway us as He wills.

Or as he puts it in another passage :

> Christ is the perfection of *our* type of being; whilst God as source of all is a being the type of whose nature belongs to Himself alone. Christ is related to God as we are related to God, receiving from Him, nourished by Him, reflecting the glory of His love and of His righteousness,—yet in humility and hope, in faith and patience, in all the attributes and attitudes of receptive vitality, answering to Him not exactly as face answers to face, but with relative graces.

It was perhaps just because this conception of Christ brought him so much nearer to humanity than the Trinitarian conception, that Mr. Thom was

led to centre his preaching so much on the effort to interpret the meaning and lessons of Christ's life. Certainly it would be hard to find any sermons which deviate less than his from the aim indicated in their title, *Laws of Life after the Mind of Christ.*

In nothing did William Rathbone follow his religious leader more closely than in this ; or, as it would possibly be truer to say, it was, above all, this element in Mr. Thom's teaching which gave it its influence over him. He himself, as he was wont to say of himself, was not a theologian nor a philosopher. One may add that he had not much of the spirit of a mystic either. The influence of religion upon him was the influence of a personality and of a life, and he believed that it was so with the majority of mankind also. In his later years it seemed to him that there was a tendency in the Unitarian body, especially among the younger ministers, who had been most influenced by modern biblical criticism, to belittle or ignore, or at least not to assert authoritatively enough, the sovereignty of Christ, and to deal too much with abstractions. He expressed this feeling on several occasions when speaking at gatherings of the Unitarian body. Thus at the Triennial Conference held in London in 1891 he said :

> It appears to me that we must look for the failure in our churches to make more progress, at a time when there has been so great an advance and growth of more liberal

views of Christianity, to causes behind and above all questions of organisation. I am satisfied that it is not in these agencies themselves, but in powers that should create and inspire them, that the causes of our failure are to be sought.

I cannot speak as a theologian. I cannot speak as a learned man. My life has been occupied with practical work, and with such study only of history and laws as I thought would be necessary, or found to be necessary, for immediate application to the practical affairs of life. But in fifty years of work, of which nearly one-half has been entirely devoted to public work, I have had the opportunity of acting with and under men and women belonging to very different and widely divided battalions of the Christian Church. I have been exercised from boyhood upwards with the problem now before us, and I have tried to find out, what were the great powers wielded by those who, in history or in the practical problems of the present day, have influenced great bodies of men, and carried onward to success important movements for their benefit.

The late Mr. Beard, in his lectures on the "Positive Aspects of Unitarian Christianity," said that, "putting aside all speculative theological considerations and looking at the matter simply from the historical point of view, Christ is the strongest, most enduring, most vivid force that was ever introduced into the world." I believe it is because we have failed to bring home to the people the force that Jesus Christ is to us, and should be to them,—the example of what God meant man to be, the revealer of His will, the leader, master, and personal indwelling friend to each and all of us,—that we have failed to give to the people that which humanity wants: not an

abstract principle, but a man and a life, which are that principle and its embodiment. We are but children after all, and we learn far more by object-lessons than by words. Mankind ever needs and will have a leader, and no one can look around on the history of his own time, not in this country alone, but in every country, without seeing that this is as true now as it has ever been; nay, that the most democratic nations seem to need and submit to a leader most absolutely.

Men will have leaders that they can understand, love, and follow. It is of no use to argue that men ought to be able to act upon abstract principles. When have they so acted? When do we so act? Does not the life of those we see and know influence us far more than anything they can say? Unitarianism was an active and very powerful force in America in Dr. Channing's time; but then it was far more positive and far less speculative than it is now. I have constantly seen, among those whom I have found most devoted in work, and most powerful in influencing others to unselfish exertions and self-sacrifice, that personal love for and personal gratitude towards Jesus Christ were the moving and sustaining powers of their character and of their work.

I maintain that it is useless to expect to influence mankind at large unless we are willing to study what powers and methods do influence them, and what, so far as we have been able to judge, have been God's methods with man, whom He has made. When we talk of religious union on grounds apart from any necessary connection with a unique revelation, I am satisfied we are not talking of a religion, which can or will influence the great body of mankind. We have no right or wish to deny to any one the name of Christian who wishes or professes to call

himself so; but if we mean our faith to spread and influence humanity we must forcibly declare and prove that by Unitarianism we mean Christianity, and by Christianity we mean the religion of Christ as set forth in his own words, and as embodied in his own person and life.

. . . I believe the main cause of our want of success among the people is that we have failed adequately to realise this law: that we have failed to keep prominently before our minds and theirs our Leader, Christ, as the object of their faith, their imitation, their affection, and their hope. . . .

Eighteen hundred years ago, Christ said, "Without me ye can do nothing." And during the centuries since, humble followers of his have from age to age arisen and accomplished work for man which was believed to be impossible, and without him was impossible. Have we realised this?

The following letter to his friend, Sir Oliver Lodge, though somewhat hastily and roughly composed, shows as well as anything I have been able to find in writing the influence of Quaker ideas upon him. He was fond of calling himself a Quaker, and justifying the claim by the saying, "Once a Quaker, always a Quaker"; though, seeing that his family ceased attending the Friends' Meeting when he was about four years old, his case seems rather an extreme application of the rule.

VILLA EMILIA, ALASSIO, *January* 21, 1894.

Many thanks for sending me M. A.'s *Revelations*. They are indeed very different from those to Mr. Speirs,

and my wife says that it was quite worth while to have been so rude to you to get so much interesting subject for consideration. To me, as a Quaker, it is not new to be told that the Spirit of God did not cease His revelations with Christ's death and ascent to his Father; for it was only after his death that, according to his promise, that Spirit would come down and dwell with us; and it was only after this, that the narrow, self-seeking, vengeful Hebrew fishermen and peasants became the regenerators of humanity—the foolishness that confounds the wisdom, the weakness that was stronger than the strength, of Greece and Rome. We Quakers believe that, just in the measure as we listen and obey, will that Spirit lead directly each human soul.

M. A. Oxon's creed (pages 69-71) is my creed, except that it is still behind Christ's teaching and my faith: that it is God Himself directly—His Spirit—that would fain guard and guide and keep me, without requiring the intervention of departed spirits; though He does use the spirits of His saints on earth to help us on our way, and may do so hereafter.

One thing I don't like—I hope to meet all those I have loved, face to face, and Jesus Christ my Lord and Master,—the revelation to me of God's will for man in a way no other human being, however good, has ever approached to; though, as you know, I detest the idea of a jealous, angry God to be propitiated by innocent suffering. It was not atonement in that sense that Jesus died to accomplish, but reconciliation, by teaching us self-sacrifice of everything—ourselves if need be, as indeed it must be—in life and death as his disciples. But if we are only to live and work with those on the same moral plane as ourselves, I am afraid myriads of years must pass

before we can again find ourselves united in work on the same plane with those we have loved and revered most, and worked with on earth. However, thank God, it is the God whose goodness to us has so measurelessly exceeded our deserts who decides all this, and He knows and does best. It is an easy thing for me to feel this, who have been so happy; but how wonderful it is that we often find that faith warmest, firmest, most joyfully hopeful, in those who have suffered most and even sinned sadly.

But I will go on with M. A.; only I wanted to send you a line to say that I agreed with you in liking him.

In the second chapter I mentioned the strong interest which William Rathbone had taken as a boy of seventeen in the founding of the Liverpool Domestic Mission. The idea which had taken so strong a hold of him then, of the responsibility of well-to-do Christian congregations for the neglected spiritual condition of the mass of the poor, never left him; and in the stress of a busy life devoted mainly to other issues, he found time for several small efforts and more plans for making the work of the churches more effective in this direction. A speech made at the Annual Meeting of the Domestic Mission in 1874, summarises views which he reiterated on several other occasions. After speaking of the work of ministers to the poor, he went on:

Now I would ask you to consider—Is the universal Christian Church, is the Nonconformist body, is our

own body in particular, so doing its duty in this direction as to entitle us to consider ourselves Christians in deed as well as in name? We must remember that, when our Saviour used the word "poor" in that case, he did not use it to designate those sunk in abject misery and poverty, but used it of those who were not rich: of the fishermen, of the carpenter, of the class to which he belonged, and through the agency of whose unweakened and unperverted manhood he intended to sweep away the corrupt and luxurious civilisation of which Rome was the centre. Where are that class now to be seen? Are they worshipping by our side? Do we not hear the constant complaint on the part of all churches that they have little influence over the artisan classes of this country; that the majority of them are out of the pale of any Christian church whatever? Go and talk to the leaders among the working classes, the men who are striving most earnestly to raise their class. Surely, in this age of thinking democracy, we ought to find in them the apostles of a faith brought into the world by one of themselves: a faith preaching the perfect equality of men and establishing the Carpenter of Galilee, who had not where to lay his head, as the Lord and Master of the whole Christian world. But no; we find them too often indifferent or antagonistic. Go into many of the churches in the lower part of the town, and you will find the clergyman left almost unsupported by the sympathy and assistance of men of his own class and education, and struggling almost hopelessly with the mass of poverty, recklessness, and unbelief around him. If he is a man of energy and ability he will probably as soon as possible move off to some country living or up-town church; and if he is not, he will probably sink into hopelessness and helplessness, or

harden into a stick; while if you turn to look for the chapel, you will find it gone altogether.

I have recently had this very forcibly brought before me by the following circumstances. Several of us have been anxious to see clubs established at which respectable working men could find social intercourse, removed from the temptations and away from the disorders of the public-house, and we have found the most suitable buildings for this purpose in deserted chapels; and these, I am sorry to say, chapels of the very sects which have hitherto been most successful in working among the less wealthy classes of the town. The fact is, the prosperity of the country has been so great that men who had character enough to belong to a chapel generally got on in the world; and, as the density and discomfort of our large towns increased, having no parochial organisation to detain them, congregation, minister, and chapel moved to the less crowded parts of the town together; and much of the work they did in the deserted districts is now either not done at all or left to be done by readers and town missionaries. Now, I have not a word to say against Scripture readers or town missionaries. They do good work as the rank and file of the Christian army, but, as a rule, they cannot expect to be fit to be its officers; and Christianity will inevitably lose its hold on the advanced portion of the working classes of this country if we rely mainly on such means. No doubt, what are most wanted are men like Mr. Lockhart:[1] men of strong heads and strong natures, born with the power of influencing their fellow-men. But such men are rare; and if we really wish to enlist the thinking and steady portion of the working classes on the

[1] W. P. Lockhart (1835-1893), a Liverpool merchant, well known as an Evangelical preacher.

side of Christianity, and their leaders as our auxiliaries in this work, we must place in their midst, and to work with them, our best and our most cultivated men.

There is another side of the question, which I should wish you to consider before suggesting a remedy for this state of things, viz. what is its effect upon us, the more comfortable and educated classes of the country? Are there no dangers to the manliness and the souls of the rich resulting from this separation of classes, extending even to religion? No doubt there is the danger that, if the separation between classes continues to widen and to harden, the working man will be narrow in his views and arrogant and violent in asserting them. But will there be no arrogance and narrowness among the rich? Is not the cold, and perhaps unsuspected, selfishness of the rich man separated from the brotherly sympathy, the duties, and responsibilities, which ought to be inseparable from wealth and leisure, more utterly withering for this world, and hopeless for the next, than violence or even actual sin? Depend upon it, our religious life, our intellectual life, nay, our very souls, are impoverished by this separation of classes. I appeal to those who have at any time worked really and steadily among the poor and with the labouring classes. Do they not look back on those periods with more satisfaction than on any other? Did they not find their minds widened and wits sharpened by hearing things viewed differently and from different standpoints from their own, and their hearts and faith strengthened by seeing sufferings nobly borne, and sacrifices and efforts simply and cheerfully made? If we go to the working man and ask him to join us, we must do so without any feeling of patronage, but with a clear consciousness of the fact, that we have quite as much to gain from him, as he

from us, by his enlistment with us as soldiers in the Christian fight. Why, what are we constantly hearing from the wealthy and aristocratic Church of England, as well as from, I believe, every dissenting sect, and certainly from our own? Is it not that there is an increasing difficulty in finding men of ability to act as clergymen and ministers of the churches? Can it be otherwise? What prospect of usefulness and power of good do you offer a man to induce him to accept the bare maintenance, which is all that most can expect, and more than all can get? You take a youth who at the best has only just completed a technical education of books and lectures, and you set him up to preach to men who know five times as much of life and men as he can do. You expect from him, too, an amount of mental labour which will leave him little time for practical work; and you expect the ministry, the greatest and the most difficult of all works, to be carried on without that apprenticeship and direction which you know to be necessary to prepare a man for even the comparatively easy work of an ordinary trade or profession.

Well, but what is the remedy for all this? It is far too difficult a question to dogmatise upon; but I would ask you to consider whether the probable remedy is not to be found in the complete organisation of a system of what I may call associated parishes and curacies on behalf of both the Church and the Nonconformists; and, for reasons which I will give presently, I conceive that we, as a branch of the latter body, are especially called upon to do our part.

I will take the Church first, because the parochial system would seem to me to make the change as regards the Church most simple and most easy. Why should

there not be a power, vested in the bishop and the patrons, to associate, for such time or period as may be fixed, a parish inhabited mainly by the wealthy and well-educated, with a parish or ecclesiastical district, in the middle of a large town, inhabited mainly by the poor? Such associated parishes would have a senior and a junior rector or vicar, or one vicar with curates, whose duties would lie equally in the two parishes. The curates would be able to preach and to work among the labouring classes, and also to preach to and stimulate the wealthier and educated classes, and thus would be gradually trained up in the practical work of a large town without losing the stimulus to keep up their culture. Can it be for a moment doubted that men preaching to and working with different classes alternately, and holding intimate ministerial relations with them, would bring to each a wider, more varied, and richer experience; would be more likely to combine practical sense and vigour with wisdom and culture; would be more capable of enlightening and leading to better things both poor and rich, than when separated as at present?

Again, I would have the wealthy Nonconformist congregations agree to divide among themselves the work of the poorer parts of the town, and each wealthy chapel should have, in its associated poorer district, another chapel, and the minister should belong equally to, and work equally in both districts. Youth and hopefulness are invaluable, nay, necessary powers, when we have to deal with the difficulties and corruption of a crowded population and an advanced civilisation; on the other hand, they are apt to do harm instead of good, unless they have some experience to fall back upon for counsel and support. The work of the poorer districts should be done jointly

by the church members of both chapels ; and by the work of the district I do not mean almsgiving, for of that there is too much already. The object of the workers should be the instruction and pleasures of the people ; to assist in the management and support of the schools, whether board or voluntary ; to improve the dwellings, to encourage prudent habits, and to promote innocent amusements and intellectual interests, and so on. It does seem to me that an organisation of this sort would not only benefit the cause of religion, but would avert many of the dangers which threaten us from the too great separation of the wealthy and the leisured classes—those who do not work at all, or work mainly with their heads, from those who work mainly with their hands. I do think that it would be better policy for the Nonconformists, and for those of them especially who believe as I do,—that the voluntary system in religion will best promote the cause of Christianity,—to leave the Established Church alone, face to face with its own internal difficulties, and to try, in a generous competition with it in the work of welldoing, to prove what the voluntary system can do, especially in gaining to its side the working classes of this country.

Several years before making this speech he had begun the experiment of supplying a few individuals with the "apprenticeship and training" for the ministry which he thought they so much needed. As he wrote to a friend long afterwards: "To take a young fellow from a great monastic institution like Oxford or Cambridge, or any of our Nonconformist Colleges, and to set him, knowing very little of mankind and probably nothing at all

of women and children, to preach to men and women who know many times as much of humanity —its difficulties and necessities—as he does, is not to ensure him the respect of men or of sensible women for his teaching." He accordingly proposed to find a young man who had taken first-class honours at the University, and to offer him £250 a year to work for three years under an experienced minister in a very poor district. He could not at first find any one suited to his purpose among the very small number of beginners in the ministry of his own denomination. So with characteristic indifference to shades of creed, he chose a Churchman, the Rev. John W. Diggle, and arranged that he should be taken as curate in one of the poorest and most difficult parishes of Liverpool, where, owing to the ill-health of the incumbent, the influence of the Church was in a decaying state. He says of the experiment: "It succeeded admirably. The church, a large one in a district deserted by the wealthy population, built to contain 1500, when I first went there with him had only some forty people in the congregation, and was gloomy and desolate-looking. By the time he had been there two years the congregation had risen to, I think, some 800; the place was cleaned up and cheerful. He did admirable service in education in Liverpool, was promoted to one of the best livings here, and I hear is now very successful as Archdeacon of

Carlisle."[1] With Mr. Diggle's help he was able to select five other Churchmen in succession to put through the same apprenticeship, and in every case was well satisfied with the result. He also made several successful ventures of the kind with men of his own denomination, but owing to the small numbers of the Unitarian ministry, and the rapidity with which most of the beginners were pressed into taking sole charge of chapels, he found it much harder to get suitable candidates. To the training and emolument which he offered under this scheme he gave the name of Missionary Fellowships.

With the clergy and ministers in Liverpool he was brought into very friendly relations by the hospitality which he was able to offer them in two small houses built for the purpose at the neighbouring little seaside resort of West Kirby in Cheshire. These he used to lend for holidays of two or three weeks—one to clergy of the Established Church, the other to Nonconformist ministers of all denominations. They were practically never empty; and perhaps none of his various devices for sharing with others the pleasures of country life and scenery, which he himself enjoyed so keenly, were more appreciated than the establishing of these two little houses.[2]

[1] Now Bishop of Carlisle.

[2] The house for clergy of the Established Church is now maintained by a Trust under the will of the late T. Mann, Esq., and that for Nonconformist ministers by a Trust established out of funds left by the Rev. J. H. Thom.

He received innumerable appeals from clergy of the Established Church for help in their social work. These he seldom refused if the work appealed to him on its merits, although he could not always refrain from comments such as the following :

DEAR SIR—It is a disgrace that a clergyman of the richest Church in Christendom should be compelled to apply to a Nonconformist for help to carry on the work of his parish. I enclose £5.—Yours, etc.[1]

His well-known readiness to co-operate with the Church of England in these ways, and in especial the large extent to which her clergy shared in the benefit of his Missionary Fellowship scheme, led some of his acquaintances to think that he was really more in sympathy with that Church than with his own. This was far from being the case ; but as a practical man he accepted the means of carrying out his aims that lay nearest to his hand, and he knew well that in supplying the spiritual needs of the class to whom he set them to minister, his young Churchmen would find little scope for expounding the subtleties of the Athanasian Creed. But both by belief and sympathies he was a Unitarian and a supporter of the voluntary system. What he had seen in America as a young man

[1] This letter was quoted from memory in a sermon preached by Archdeacon Madden on the Sunday after William Rathbone's death. Its wording may therefore not be quite accurate; but replies to much the same effect rather more suavely worded were sent in response to many such appeals.

had convinced him, that a church attained to much more vigorous life when dependent upon the zeal and self-sacrifice of its members, than when it relied upon the State and upon great endowments. In principle, therefore, he was unhesitatingly in favour of Disestablishment—at first rather upon the ground that to be disestablished would be good for the Church of England than upon that of an injustice done to other denominations by the State preference of one form of religion. When he became member for a Welsh constituency, this latter aspect of the question was forced upon his attention in its most convincing form. He found that there the Established Church was the church of a small minority, and that composed chiefly of the middle and upper classes. The mass of the people belonged to various denominations; but all were linked together by the bond of a common hostility to what they regarded as a privileged and alien church. They were poor, but they managed to support their own ministers and chapels and Sunday schools; and they felt it hard that their small farmers, who in bad seasons could hardly make both ends meet, should have to pay tithes to the clergy of the church to which their wealthy landlords belonged. They had strong national feeling, and dissent had become so much the religion of the nation, that they believed they had as much claim as Scotland or Ireland to separate treatment

in this matter. Their sincere piety, and the large place which activities connected with their religion occupied in their lives, made it all the more unfortunate, that a question closely touching their religious interests should also be the centre of their strongest political feeling, the most telling theme of electioneering appeals, the chief cause of alienation and jealousy between classes. An alliance between religion and politics is always a dangerous thing; for religion embitters the spirit of party, which it should soften and sweeten. Men are tempted unconsciously to exaggerate the strength of their conscientious scruples in order to give greater force to their political demands, and entire sincerity becomes almost impossible. Yet when the majority of a community are firmly convinced that in the outward organisation of its religion there is a vital defect, which only political agitation can remove, then it may be better to incur this danger till their point is gained, rather than to let the defect remain as a permanent hindrance in the way of the full and free development of their religious life.

Under the pressure of these facts, William Rathbone gave to Disestablishment, during the remaining fifteen years of his parliamentary life, a prominent place in his speeches and addresses to his constituents, and did his best for it in and out of Parliament. Mr. Dilwyn's motion on Welsh

Disestablishment was the first question of great importance on which he ever voted against Mr. Gladstone. It was possibly true, as some of the most zealous Nonconformists of his constituency occasionally hinted, that Disestablishment was not among the questions in which his interest was most spontaneous and vivid. If this was so, the reason for his comparative coolness was certainly not that he had any doubt as to the justice of the measure, or its importance to Wales. It was due rather to a characteristic of his mind which showed itself no less in regard to other matters. There can be no doubt that questions which involved the assertion of the rights of one side against another, the adjustment of rival claims, the vindication of status, were not often among the questions for which he cared the most. Of some men it would be true to say that nearly every evil presents itself to them as a form of injustice; but his mind was not of this type. Its bent was too strictly practical and objective, its attitude too much determined by a humility partly natural, partly the fruit of his religious faith, which extended itself vicariously to all human claims. To him the important matter seemed to be that the work which had to be done should be done as efficiently and thoroughly as possible,—that the conditions of life should be so improved as to weigh less oppressively on the many and lessen temptation to self-indulgence for

the few,—that every one should get, not so much his fair share, whatever that might be, but a chance of making the best of himself. Of the reactions of the work on the workers, of their relative positions, opportunities, and merits, he thought comparatively little, although in specific instances he would have been very ready to admit that others were justified in thinking a good deal. Declarations of right often commanded his assent and practical support, but they did not often proceed spontaneously from his own mouth, even when they concerned the rights of others, and still less when they concerned his own. His attitude upon questions such as Disestablishment, the various proposed extensions of the franchise, the civil and political position of women,[1] etc., may be taken, I think, as examples of this characteristic of his mind.

In the work of his own Church his chief interest centred in the Domestic Missions. These, in the course of time, had lost their purely domestic character, and had acquired all the usual apparatus and organisation of modern church work in poor parishes. The change was probably inevitable ; for ministers, brought into such close contact with the very poor, were almost irresistibly impelled to make some effort to supply other of their needs besides

[1] He was indifferent, though not opposed, to the enfranchisement of women, until experience with the Registration of Midwives Bill showed him that women's interests were apt to be neglected because they could not enforce them.

that of religious teaching. But William Rathbone, with some of the other early friends of the Missions, was inclined to regret the change a little. Man of affairs and organiser as he was himself, he felt strongly the danger of over-rating what organisation could do, and feared lest the absorbing and more easily fruitful work of providing services, schools, clubs, recreations, and relief might overshadow and spoil the simplicity of the original purpose of the Missions—that of bringing Christian ministration directly into the homes of those who attended no church, and of standing to them as the representatives of purely spiritual things.

Of what his own religious life meant to him, the reader will, it is hoped, have gathered something as he went along from the preceding narrative of the incidents and work of his life. For it was in these, rather than in words, that he revealed most of himself and of his religious beliefs. He interpreted his own discipleship of Christ very literally, as something that should not only govern the inward spiritual life, but should condition and direct his activities of every kind. The ultimate implicit aim of all public work, conducted in the right spirit, was in his view, to make the conditions of national or civic or individual life a little less out of harmony with the ideal of a kingdom of God on earth. To keep this end ever before the mind as the sole end; never to allow considerations

of personal advantage, or ambition, or credit, to influence by a hair's-breadth decisions in work undertaken ostensibly for the public benefit; never, even for the sake of securing an advantage for the particular cause or object at which he was working, to consent to sacrifice to it wider interests or principles of right and justice,—all this seemed to him implied in his religious profession. It would probably be hardly too much to say that every important decision he had to make presented itself more or less consciously to his mind as a question of right and wrong.

Even in work which had for its immediate end merely the enrichment of himself and his family, he found plenty of scope for the principles, and plenty of need for the restraints, imposed by Christian ethics. Even when no other principle was involved, there was always the duty of doing thoroughly whatever had to be done, of making the most of his own and the world's opportunities, and of training younger men and subordinates to do the same.

But although he drew no sharp line between the things of the world and the things of God, but dealt with the one in a spirit drawn from the other, his conception of religion and of religious duty was not bounded by the gospel of St. James. The spiritual relation between God and Man, from which he believed himself to derive whatever

in him was good, meant a great deal to him, and he neglected none of the usual aids by which religious men of all communions strive to maintain and strengthen their consciousness of this relation. In this, as in every part of life, he made much use of fixed rules and stated seasons and observances, finding in these not fetters for the will, but a means of setting it free from the worry of innumerable petty decisions. On Sundays he was careful to put aside the work of the week, and as far as possible the week-day subjects of thought, except when there was some clear and urgent need for haste. Even at times when his mind seemed beset and harassed to a painful degree by some difficult question which he had to decide, his friends were sometimes astonished at his power of turning his attention resolutely for that day to other subjects. While his children were young he usually gave up his Sundays after morning service a good deal to them, reading and talking with them, and taking them when possible for long country walks.

Except to his children, and to those for whom he felt a direct responsibility, he did not speak often or easily on the high theme of religion, although he had none of the unconquerable reticence about it which makes speech almost a physical impossibility to many people. But no one could work with him or live near him long, without feeling the presence of the hidden springs that

were the source of his energy and his strength, and without catching glimpses of the foundations upon which his faith and hope for humanity, and his charity towards men, were based. Many types of goodness are independent of a definite religious faith, and seem to flourish as well without it, but his type was not one of these. It was his belief in the providence of God and in the immortality of man that justified his unfailing optimism ; that made his perennial hopefulness different from the mere buoyancy of high animal spirits, and made the almost universal charity of his judgments different from that which proceeds from a facile and shallow good-nature. The principle upon which he so often insisted, that whatever ought to be done can be done, was to him a necessary deduction from his religious faith, and there can be no doubt that it was his unhesitating reliance upon this principle that enabled him to accomplish so much. It gave him faith in his cause and confidence in himself ; and his confidence, visible through the medium of his natural humility, kindled in others who knew nothing of its source a faith resembling his own.

CHAPTER XIII

OLD AGE—1895 TO 1902

"Ah, yes, Euphranor! could one by so full apprenticeship of Youth become so thoroughly seasoned with its Spirit, that all the Reason of Manhood, and Politic of Age, and Experience of the World, should serve not to freeze, but to direct the genial current of the Soul, so that

> "Ev'n while the vital Heat retreats below,
> Ev'n while the hoary head is lost in Snow,
> The *Life* is in the leaf, and still between
> The fits of falling Snow appear the streaky Green—

that Boy's Heart within the Man's never ceasing to throb and tremble even to remotest Age—then, indeed, your Senate would need no other Youth than its Elders to vivify their counsel, or could admit the Young without danger of corrupting them by ignoble policy."—*Euphranor*, by Edward FitzGerald.

It was one of William Rathbone's favourite maxims, borrowed, I believe, though I have been unable to trace it, from a sermon of Dr. Martineau's, that a good Christian ought never to grow old. If he had really the spirit of Christianity in him, he asserted, it would keep him always young, at least in heart and hope. And in this qualified sense he lived to verify his theory. He was once,

when past his seventieth year, describing an encounter he had had with a certain old lady of high rank, who sat on a committee over which he presided. He had been obliged to call her rather decisively to order for some persistent irrelevancies in debate. "She was very nice about it," he said. "It was very good of her to take it so well *from a young fellow like me*." He caught himself up at once; and by doing so betrayed that no jest was intended. It was impossible not to laugh; but it was impossible not to feel that the laugh was really with the man who could prove by such a slip that his strength at least was not yet become labour and sorrow.

This remained true in some ways to the end of his life. He had inherited from his mother the tenacious and exuberant vitality that belonged to her family, and until actual illness came upon him, the zest of mere living seemed undulled. There was no abatement, almost up to the end, in his enjoyment of books, sunshine, and flowers. Riding and visits to mountainous scenery—to complete the list of what were probably his chief pleasures[1]—had to be given up only during

[1] Perhaps I should add smoking to the list, but he would have bitterly resented this himself. His enjoyment of tobacco was, however, all the keener for the severe limits which he set to it. He restricted himself to two very small cigars a day, but always kept a varied stock in hand to offer to his visitors, having a great faith in the emollient virtues of tobacco in difficult negotiations.

the last eighteen months. For the loss of the few sources of enjoyment which belong only to youth, he found much compensation in the greater security and freedom from responsibility of age. One day when riding in the Row with a friend whom he had known from boyhood, a discussion arose as to which had been the happiest period of their lives. Both agreed that upon the whole their later manhood had been the happiest, and both gave the same reason—that as young men they had been weighed down by a constant sense of anxiety as to what was the next best step to take, and by the fear lest they should make a muddle of their lives.

William Rathbone's outlook upon the world kept all the characteristics of his youth. His belief in progress in general, and his desire for rapidity of progress in his special pursuits, were as strong as ever. In some matters he even became "an old man in a hurry," not probably so much from a natural desire himself to see results, as from a well-founded consciousness that when he was gone there would be no one left working at that particular task who was his equal in sheer driving power. In spite of this consciousness he habitually assumed that every young man of average ability and physique, and with a firm foothold to start from, had it in him to do for Liverpool, *if he but would*, at least as much as he

himself and his brothers and friends who worked with him had done. He may have been right, with the qualification which he admitted. According to Charles Lamb, Wordsworth once boasted that he could have written plays as good as Shakespeare's, *if he had had the mind*, and the company all allowed the claim. What men like him seldom realise is, that the strong will which has enabled them to do so much is as much a gift of Nature, and as little to be attained save by Nature's gift, as a strong brain. His very belief in the possibilities of every character, and his optimistic attitude towards men in the mass, thus made him often severer than men of more cynical disposition would have been, in his judgment upon individuals who had once decisively disappointed his expectations. But his hopes died hard, or rather they did not die, but transferred themselves to the next comer. After each disappointment he was as ready as ever to believe that the next notorious skinflint would become a generous benefactor to education, or to nursing, if only the claims of those good causes could be effectively enough laid before him. Perhaps having experienced the value of this belief, he more or less consciously fostered it, and certainly the persuasiveness it lent to his begging won him some remarkable triumphs.

Yet while in these ways he seemed as young as

ever, Nature did not leave him without reminders of the passage of time. For some years before he left Parliament his powers of work had visibly declined. He could then and for long afterwards spend nearly the whole day between the desk and the committee-room, but the amount he got through diminished. Mind and body still swung well together, but the motion was slowing down. His powers of expression had always lagged far behind his powers of thought, and as time went on he found an increasing difficulty in putting what he had to say into clear and terse language. He had been for long slightly deaf, and in his later years this infirmity increased so much that general conversation was lost to him, and even dialogue involved a constant slight strain. He found his deafness a serious barrier to his work in the House of Commons, and it destroyed so much of the pleasure of social intercourse there as sensibly to lessen his regret at leaving.

No one can say good-bye to the place where he has worked for twenty-six years without some emotion, and however severely William Rathbone might criticise the House of Commons as a legislative machine, he had thoroughly appreciated it as the "best club in London." But at the time when the break came, he was under the shadow of too great an anxiety to have much thought to give to sentimental regrets. His second son, Ashton,

had for some months been suffering under a mysterious complaint, which proved at last to be an obscure form of blood-poisoning. All summer he grew gradually worse, and on September 23 he died. He had been for some time the only one of William Rathbone's sons who had seemed permanently settled in Liverpool, and he was the one upon whose advice and help he had for some years past relied in all matters concerning his Liverpool life and interests. Now that he was returning home to give what years might remain to him to those interests, the clear and sober judgment, the unusual fineness of perception and instinct, upon which he had hoped to lean more and more as his own powers declined, were altogether withdrawn.

The circle of his older friends was already much diminished, and it continued to narrow fast. His cousin, Mr. George Melly, whose brilliant abilities had always been at the service of his friends after his own too short political career was over, had died in 1894. His brother, S. G. Rathbone, his closest friend, and next to his wife his most valued adviser in all his work, had fallen into bad health, and soon after retired to live altogether at his country house. During the last twenty years of his active life he had devoted himself almost entirely to the work of the Liverpool School Board, of which he was for eighteen years

chairman, and had taken a leading part in all the developments which have given the system of elementary education in Liverpool its high place. The first pupil teachers' centre held in connection with any School Board had been started by him, and for some time maintained at his own expense. He had also originated the system, since become general, of giving regular scientific instruction in the elementary schools by means of visiting teachers, and had had much to do with the foundation of the Day Industrial Schools and of the Edge Hill Training College for women. He had become well known among educationalists as an authority on his subject, and had sat upon the Royal Commission appointed in 1885 to inquire into the working of the Elementary Education Acts.

In November 1895, Philip Rathbone, the youngest of the three brothers, died after a very short illness, at the age of sixty-seven. He had not been a member of the same firm as his two elder brothers, and neither in business nor in the public work of his later life had he been brought into such close intercourse with either of them as they had been with each other. Yet it seemed rather by chance than anything else that the lines of their several activities had crossed so seldom. All three had taken a share in the work of local administration in Liverpool, but each had identified

himself with a different branch—one with Poor Law, the other with the School Board, and Philip Rathbone with the Town Council.

S. G. Rathbone and Philip Rathbone had indeed been together for five years in the Town Council, but when, in 1873, the elder brother gave up the Council for the School Board, Philip Rathbone remained, and was at the time of his death its senior member. There he was active in several departments, but his principal interest was the work of the Museums and Art Committee. He was a connoisseur in pictures, and took a leading part in the management and selection of pictures for the annual Autumn Exhibition, which had been started chiefly on the initiative of himself and of Alderman Samuelson. For some of the most modern schools of impressionism he had a great admiration, as he had for every development in art which seemed to him to show individuality, spontaneity, and growth. His choice of pictures for the public galleries sometimes tried the faith of his fellow-citizens, though it was generally admitted that he and his colleagues succeeded in making both the permanent and the annual exhibitions perhaps the most interesting and representative in any provincial town.

He believed in strengthening corporate life and in quickening civic patriotism, by appealing to men through their senses and making the visible city a

place to be proud of. Every institution and project for fostering its artistic life, or for improving its architecture, or for giving it beauty and dignity in any form, was sure of his sympathy, and generally enlisted him as one of its most active supporters. The idea which guided his own public work, and which he did much to impress upon the consciousness of the community, was expressed in a sentence occurring in an address which he gave to the Art Congress at Birmingham: — "Let us not be ashamed to cultivate what I venture to call *corporate egotism*: to strive that the feelings, passions, affections, and aspirations of a generation shall be recorded for future ages in the creations of a truly national art."

In artistic matters his brothers could not follow him, and he probably regarded them as Philistines. But one interest they all had in common: a strong love for their native city, and a desire to press into its service every one who could contribute anything of value, and could be trusted to serve it with a single eye to the public good.

Other deaths among William Rathbone's friends and fellow-workers followed in quick succession during the next few years: among them Mr. Edward Gibbon, for twenty-eight years Chairman of the Royal Infirmary, with whom he had worked at the founding and development of the Training School for Nurses; Mr. Charles Langton, also

associated with him for forty years in the work of the Training School, and especially of the branch devoted to district nursing; Mr. Edward Paul, for many years his partner in the firm of Messrs. Ross T. Smyth and Co.; and Sir Henry Tate, who had made William Rathbone his almoner in many of his magnificent benefactions to nursing, to elementary education, to the Liverpool University College (now the University of Liverpool), and to intermediate education in Liverpool and in Wales.

All these losses could not but bring home to him how soon, at latest, his own working days must draw to a close. He refused to take up any fresh work, but kept steadily on with all the enterprises with which he was already connected—the District Nursing, the Royal Infirmary, the Consumption Hospital and Woolton Convalescent Home, the University Council, and, above all, his Guardianship of the Poor.

The sum of work accomplished during these seven years was not large. Most of it was merely a carrying on at steadily diminishing pace of the routine of committees and of the daily toll of correspondence about matters long since set in train. Yet it would probably not be an exaggeration to say that William Rathbone's influence was greater during these years than it had ever been before. There is often a period after a man's death of which the same thing may be said. Death

fixes the eyes of his world upon him more than anything in his life has done, and at the same time disposes them to think the best of all that they see. The principles that he has upheld, the causes for which he has worked, the virtues which his character embodies,—all then make their strongest appeal. But this period is necessarily short. The strange glamour that hangs about the moment of passing soon disperses. Men turn to other things. Before he has been long in the grave he is either forgotten, or is as critically estimated and as much open to attack as the living, and without the power that belongs to the living, of self-defence.

Under some conditions, old age may do as much as death to set a man's personality upon a hill, and to cast a strong and favourable light upon it. An old man, no longer a possible competitor for power or prizes, excites no one's jealousy. Yet if he continues to work according to his powers, his experience commands every one's respect. Every instinct and tradition assures him an attentive hearing and inclines men to gratify his wishes. To the old, as to children, men are not ashamed of being demonstrative, and the admiration and affection which, if centred upon younger men, would be pent up until too late to give pleasure or encouragement, are poured out upon them without stint. Young people are exhorted to imitate their example, and in their case the duty

of vicarious modesty is perhaps even too much set aside.

In William Rathbone's circumstances, to say nothing of his character, there were at least two points which made his fellow-citizens even more than usually disposed to give full vent to these generous instincts. The diversity of his public activities won him more general sympathy than he could have secured if all his energies had been concentrated upon a single branch of work, which would inevitably have failed to appeal to some. In labouring by turns in the field of politics, of the Poor Law, of charity, of the organisation of nursing, and of higher and intermediate education, he had been brought into relation with large numbers of men and women of very different opinions and tastes. Of these interests, charity and nursing were no doubt the two that touched the popular imagination the most. The system of district nursing in particular, which had sprung from the humble beginning made in Liverpool forty years before, and had spread all over the country, had benefited innumerable lives, and though few even of his fellow-citizens knew the facts, the instinct of gratitude fastened upon the old man still in their midst, who, next to the nurses themselves, stood to them as the representative of the institution.

But besides the share which he had won for

himself in the affections of Liverpool men, there can be no doubt that to some extent he reaped a harvest which had been sown by at least four other men and one woman, who had done in their day good service to the city—his grandfather, his father, his mother, and his two brothers. A strength of feeling that had been gathering round his name, his home, and all that they had represented in the life of Liverpool for more than a century, broke in full force upon him.

It found public and formal expression on a number of occasions — some of them designed purposely to do him honour—which were scattered over the last ten years of his life. The first of these was the presentation of the honorary freedom of the city to him, and to his friend, Sir Henry Tate, on October 21, 1891. He could boast, like St. Paul, that he was a freeman born, although he had never chosen to pocket the yearly cheque which was until recently the outward and visible sign of those privileges of freemen which his father had done so much to protest against. But his free birth was, of course, no obstacle to his inclusion on the honorary roll, established under the Act of 1885, enabling Municipal Corporations to do honour to persons who have rendered special service to their country or their borough. In his speech of thanks at this ceremony he used some expressions about property being a trust and not a freehold,

which, repeated since on divers occasions in slightly varying form, became more, perhaps, than any other words of his, identified with his name :

Allusion has been made to my having devoted some part of the wealth gained in Liverpool to the benefit of the town. Here, again, it is I who am the debtor ; it is I, and not my fellow-citizens, from whom gratitude is due. As we all admit, whatever we may possess of wealth, talents, station, and opportunity are not freeholds to be selfishly enjoyed by a man and his family and friends, but sacred trusts to be employed for the welfare of the community. And of all beyond what is necessary for maintenance, education, and moderate provision for his family, an increasing proportion is due as wealth and power increase to the public service, not from generosity, but as the honest payment of debt. Life and experience only bring this more home to me. Which of the sacrifices which a prosperous man makes can be considered generous when looked at with those which thousands of our men and women make daily and unhesitatingly, in times of distress, illness, or death, when they share with their neighbours the means only too inadequate for the supply of the wants of themselves and their families ? It is easy for the prosperous to be deemed generous, difficult for them to deserve to be so called.

In May 1895 the Victoria University exercised for the first time its power of conferring honorary degrees. The function took place in Manchester, and William Rathbone was among those admitted to the degree of Doctor of Laws. Had the

arrangement first made been carried out, the honour would have been conferred at the same time upon his old friend, Mr. Thomas Ashton; but a bereavement kept Mr. Ashton away. The two friends, who had been fellow-students at St. Domingo House, and again at the University of Heidelberg, had each become one of the prime founders of a University College in his own town. Professor Wilkins, who presented the candidates for degrees, briefly summed up the merits of each. His eulogy of William Rathbone, who must have been personally almost a stranger to him, was very happy, and it covers so much ground in a short space that I venture to quote the bulk of it:

In this city, my Lord, there stands a statue of one whom this University and the Owens College have lost but recently from their courts and councils. It bears on its base this inscription:—"In memory of a life devoted to the public good." The words are simple, but no elaborate eulogy could so well recall to those who knew him the work of Oliver Heywood. Could any fitter words be found to use of him whom I have now to present to your Lordship? His life has been devoted to the public good. If I may venture to touch for one moment on what is most characteristic in efforts now extending over half a century, I would say that they give a splendid example of what is best in the methods of modern philanthropy. The patient collection and study of facts have always preceded the proposal of remedial measures. In workhouse nursing, in local government,

in licensing reform, in primary, in secondary, and in higher education, both in England and in Wales, his work has been abundantly fruitful, because it has been based on that most accurate knowledge, as well as inspired by the deepest sense of the responsibility of those who have wealth and culture. In the House of Commons he has so borne himself for more than a quarter of a century that those whom he has opposed, not less than those whom he has so loyally supported, would feel the great council of the nation the poorer if he should leave it. We need not forget all this because we think to-day more especially of his services to the University, both directly and through one of her Colleges. In our sister city on the Mersey many citizens have shared with splendid liberality in the work of building up the University College. But all would gladly admit that success was due mainly to the energy, the munificence, the unfailing faith in the future of one man. To all these founders and benefactors we desire to do honour in the person of their most prominent and worthy representative. On behalf of the Court I present to you for the degree of Doctor of Laws, Mr. William Rathbone.

Later, a bust of him, executed by Mr. Charles Allen, the professor of sculpture at Liverpool University College, was presented to the College by Professor Oliver Lodge.[1] In 1899 a great banquet was held in his honour at the Liverpool Reform Club, and again many noble and appreciative things were said by all the speakers. A bust executed by Mr. Hargreaves Bond, and

[1] Now Sir Oliver Lodge, Principal of Birmingham University.

presented to the Club by William Rathbone's old friend and political ally, Mr. Robert D. Holt, was afterwards unveiled.

This list of honours and ceremonials, which might be extended, was finally crowned by the unveiling in St. John's Gardens of a bronze portrait statue, the work of Mr. Charles Frampton, R.A. It had been erected by public subscription : a subscription to which no contributions were solicited, and to which all classes in the community contributed. It is usual to pay this form of tribute to men only after their death. Those who were responsible for carrying through the matter deliberately decided that they would not follow this custom, but that every proof of their affection and gratitude should be given while he was yet among them and able to be made happier by it. He was not well enough to be present at the ceremony of unveiling, and probably would not have wished it had he been able, but as he lay in bed he listened to the account of it with a smile of quiet pleasure, not at all lessened by his feeling that he was listening, in a sense, to a part of his own funeral rite.

Besides and between these more formal occasions of honour, there continued to pour in upon him many private and public testimonies to the strength of the affection and regard that his fellow-citizens bore him. He seldom took part in any meeting or took any action calling for the notice of the

press that the opportunity was not taken of paying him this sort of homage.

Those who knew him, and knew how deep-seated and genuine was the modesty so often eulogised in language that seemed to violate what it praised; used sometimes to ask how he himself was affected by all this incense-burning. In public he deprecated it, but he could hardly have done less. What was his real attitude towards it? He often experienced, of course, the shrinking and impulse to fly, natural to a man who has to sit with the eyes of an audience upon him and listen to his own praises. But he was so free from self-consciousness, and so accustomed to live much in public, that he probably felt this less than many less really humble men would have done. Only when he thought he saw a tendency for the praise of him to become something like a fashion, did he grow rather acutely mindful of the fate of Aristides. At the close of his life, he wrote down his own deliberate estimate of himself, and of the cause of such success as he had attained to in life, in a passage which is given at the end of this Memoir. In this he draws a distinction between the work and the worker, between the amount of a man's visible achievement and the abilities and "efforts and sacrifices" which have enabled him to achieve, and he argues that the two are seldom in proportion—the men of genius who formulate great principles

being seldom those who put them to practical application. This was a distinction which, I think, always entered into his retrospect of his own life. Of himself, his abilities, and qualities he thought little, but the work that he had done would have been much less than it was if he had not been intensely convinced that it was well worth doing. Thus the spring of feeling which the praises of his fellow-citizens never failed to call forth seemed to run, as it were, in two channels. So far as their words were personal to himself, he thought they far over-shot the mark, and testified rather to the warmth of the speakers' hearts than to his own merits. As proofs of affection he accepted them with a gratitude tinged by wonder, and with a simple and childlike pleasure. In their references to the substance of his work he took a more critical and a characteristically practical interest. The question for him was then: What effect would the publicity given to his particular share in the causes and enterprises for which he had worked, have upon the future prospects of those enterprises, and upon the public life of the city generally? Would it make it easier for the fellow-workers whom he must shortly leave, to get recruits? Would it open the eyes of young men to the possibilities—of honour and happiness as well as of usefulness—to be found in a life spent in the public service?

This last thought was indeed the main preoccupation of his later years. To him, three lives as long as the one he had lived would scarcely have given him time enough to grapple with the problems that he saw plainly laid out before him in the line of his own activities, in his own city of Liverpool. It filled him with impatience to think that so many young men, as well qualified by nature to do the work, he honestly believed, as himself, were "spending all their fires, wasting their strength in strenuous idleness." If he could not hope to do much more work himself, he would at least do what he could to diminish this worst form of waste.

In this endeavour he was far from unsuccessful. Many men were led by his persuasions to take up some piece of public work; some of them consenting merely because, as they said, "it was impossible to refuse the dear old man"; and becoming interested, as he had prophesied, in the work for its own sake, have been led on to other activities. Among older men and women there are not a few—it is impossible to say how many, but every year some chance utterance adds to the number—who have written or said that the strongest impulse that led them to their present immersion in political, civic, or philanthropic work had been given them by William Rathbone. Yet his effect on the standard of citizenship and of social conduct

in Liverpool cannot be measured by the number of those whom he consciously influenced. More effective than anything he could say was the silent witness of his own character and life.

It would be useless, at least for the writer, to try to describe as a whole the impression which his personality made upon others, or to describe the process by which he succeeded in pouring some of his own spirit into other spirits, as some men fail to do who are his equals in goodness, and, as he would have insisted upon adding, more than his equals in intellecual power. The impression, of course, varied with the individual. But besides this, there was something in it which escapes definition. There were certain salient qualities that every one perceived : a strong will, which acted as a magnet on weaker wills ; untiring industry, unrelaxed even in old age, rebuking the indolence of younger men ; an abounding vitality, which upon those susceptible to such influences, had somewhat the bracing effect of a mountain breeze ; an obvious, utter disinterestedness before which small ambitions and jealousies shrank away ; an infectious confidence that the ends for which he worked were good, and that being good they must, under the providence of God, be attainable. But whether in addition to or as an outcome of these characteristics, his personality possessed for most people

(there were no doubt plenty of exceptions) that indefinable and incommunicable quality called charm, which does for character something like what sunshine does for landscape. In his intercourse with individuals it was no doubt often his faith in them that was the beginning both of their liking for him and of his influence over their lives. In what he assumed their characters and wills to be already, they saw the reflection of their own secret knowledge of the best they had it in them to become, and they felt impelled to try to justify his faith. He was not, it seemed, altogether unconscious of this, and he would probably have justified himself for the use of this means of influence on the ground that the best a man has it in him to become is "his real self." To young people with whom he was brought in contact either by work or by amusements shared together, there was something attractive and flattering in his way of taking them, as it were, into alliance and talking to them—if anything happened to start him, and if they showed any sign of intelligent interest—about the subjects for which he cared, exactly as he would have talked to his contemporaries and intimates. Nor did this habit begin only with old age. Mr. W. S. Caine, a friend and political ally much younger than himself, who yet survived him only by a year, once described how, when a youth, he had been introduced to him on

the New Brighton boat; and how gratified he had been when William Rathbone, then a busy merchant of forty, much engrossed in local politics and social reform, poured forth to him a stream of talk upon some of his public interests.

As the number of his contemporaries dwindled, it was fortunate for him that he had this capacity for forming friendships with younger men. Often, indeed, he seemed more at home in their company, more ready to turn to them for social intercourse as well as for advice and sympathy in his public interests, than to the survivors among the "old gang." No doubt his "Boy's heart within the Man's" felt them more really of an age. To these new friends, who gave him all that he asked for, and surrounded him besides with a kind of affectionate homage almost filial, those nearest him must be ever grateful. It would be difficult to give a complete list, and invidious to give an incomplete one. If the foundation of Liverpool University[1] was, as was often said, largely his work, he received for it one very personal form of reward, for several of the men whom it brought to Liverpool became first his sons' friends and afterwards his own. Among the friendships which had not this origin, one may perhaps be allowed to mention that with Mr. A. F. Warr, who gave him in his private as well as his public affairs invaluable help.

[1] I give it the name it is now known by.

He was not much away from Liverpool during these years, except for short visits in the spring or autumn to his little villa at Alassio, on the Italian Riviera, and the six weeks' or two months' summer holiday, spent either abroad, or at some house taken for the summer in Scotland or Ireland. During his twenty-six years of parliamentary life he had been seldom at home except for the three months of mid-winter, and he enjoyed renewing his intimacy with his native place. He had often revelled in the flowers of Italy and Switzerland, but the pleasure of watching the slow changes of Nature in his own garden was new to him, and it gave him endless delight. He liked to ride about the suburban parts that lie beyond Greenbank—country parts one can hardly call them ; for most of the roads wind between the parks and gardens of wealthy citizens, and these are screened off from the vulgar gaze by walls so preposterously high that to the pedestrian the effect is much like walking in the courtyard of a jail. William Rathbone, it is needless to say, heartily disapproved the walls ; but he knew the names and histories of those who had dwelt behind many of them for the past three-quarters of a century, and his anecdotes and reminiscences sweetened the way. He liked best the road that runs through genuine green fields to the old church of Childwall ; then past Gateacre, where he never failed to point out the dame-school

whither he had been sent as a recalcitrant youth of six; over Woolton Hill, whence there is a wide view over plain and river to the blue Flintshire Hills; past the Convalescent Institution with its associations of Cotton Famine days,[1] and so home between the inevitable walls.

Four times a week he rode into town to the meetings of the Poor Law Guardians. His figure, as he clattered past on his black horse, became very familiar to Liverpool citizens, and possibly survives in more memories than any other personal impression of him. Sitting rather forward and bending over his horse's neck, the pockets of his Inverness cape stuffed out with papers, his whole appearance betokened business and an eagerness to arrive. The horse, a thick-necked Welsh cob with very showy action, nicknamed Pegasus from its likeness to some of Flaxman's illustrations, was as unlike the typical old gentleman's pony as it could well be, and was greatly valued by him on that account. It gave him, he said, more exercise in one hour than any other horse in two; and he was not a little proud of the fact that none of his sons or daughters could manage it. He had very good hands; but he seemed to manage this horse largely by issuing his orders to it as though it were a

[1] Woolton Convalescent was built and endowed with the unspent surplus of the Liverpool contribution to the Cotton Famine Relief Fund of 1862. See pp. 187-190.

regiment, and it obeyed him with a rather startling abruptness.

His eightieth birthday, February 11, 1899, was celebrated at Greenbank by a large family gathering, attended by some hundred of his kinsfolk, and by a few old friends whose only relation to him was one of friendship. He seemed then hale and well, and very happy in his old age. But he had often said that he did not expect his active life to be prolonged after eighty, and he proved nearly right. In the late autumn he had a virulent attack of eczema, a seemingly trivial but irritating and wearing complaint, from which he was never afterwards long free. He was for some weeks in bed, but recovered sufficiently to go down to the Reform Club on the afternoon of December 4, to unveil a bust of Mr. Gladstone, and to be present afterwards at the banquet given in his honour. At both ceremonies he made long speeches. It was then the darkest days of the South African war, and in most minds Mr. Gladstone's policy in the winter of 1880 was the first thought suggested by his name. After a few personal reminiscences of his former leader, therefore, William Rathbone occupied the rest of his speech in explaining the grounds for his unaltered conviction that Mr. Gladstone's retrocession of the Transvaal, "determined on in circumstances that left no choice open but a choice of dangers, and undertaken on

the facts which were then known or could be then known," had been not only, as it had been called, a sublime experiment, but "an act dictated by true statesmanship." He admitted that the fear of permanently embittering and alienating the Cape Dutch had had some influence upon the Government's decision, but he insisted that "the motive, the main motive, which actuated Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party whom he led, was the fear of shedding blood in an unrighteous policy." All that prevented the policy of retrocession having the success it deserved was, he believed, two events which could not possibly have been foreseen—the discovery of the gold-fields, and the Jameson Raid. With a voice shaken by emotion he declared his anxiety to express, on what would probably be his last occasion for addressing the Liberal party, how deeply he shared the conviction which had been the guiding principle of Mr. Gladstone's life, that in the life of nations as of individuals Right in the longrun is Might, and must prevail. In his evening speech he dwelt principally on his reminiscences of the "grand old guard of Liverpool Liberals" among whom his youth had been spent. He summed up the legislative triumphs of the last half-century, and then insisted once more on his favourite theme, that to-day "it is not legislation but administration that claims our most determined efforts." He ended by a passionate

warning to his hearers to beware lest they let corruption enter their public life.

> Let us therefore watch with the utmost vigilance for any sign of a disposition in men to get into Parliament, or into our local councils or boards, not in order to serve the public, but to obtain directorships, or contracts, or some other benefit for themselves, their friends, or their constituents. When you come to make public employment dependent upon politics, you strike at the virtue of the great mass of our population; you degrade them. Let us shun such men as political lepers, to be sent back to obscurity where they may hide their vileness. For as long as God is God and history is history, it is certain that the fate of an empire is decided when corruption enters into public life, and when prosperity is misused in the interest of selfish luxury, instead of being held with everything that is best, as a sacred and holy trust.

During the first six months of 1900 he suffered from frequent outbursts of his troublesome malady; but he was able in the intervals to attend the meetings of the Vestry and of the College Council, and pursue his work as usual. At Easter he went with his wife and daughter and son-in-law to the Italian lakes. He enjoyed the scenery as much as ever, but it was not like other visits. He was compelled for the first time to travel as an invalid, and he was never really at ease. As the weather grew warmer his health improved. The family moved to Invergloy, a house

he had taken for July and August by the shores of the Caledonian Canal. He began to ride again, and the roads in the neighbourhood being few, he was as adventurous as ever in scrambling his pony over the rough hillsides. Suddenly he was seized with an attack of jaundice. He grew rapidly worse; a London specialist was sent for, who pronounced him to be suffering from ptomaine poisoning and congestion of the lungs. For a time his strength wavered, then seemed to sink, and a day came when practically all hope was given up. But the extraordinary tenacity of constitution which he inherited from his mother's family for once proved an unmixed boon to its possessor. As he lay in what seemed the stupor of impending death, those around him noticed a change. His features relaxed; he breathed more easily; unconsciousness had passed into sleep. From that time he grew steadily better, though with occasional threatenings of relapse. By the beginning of September he was still very weak, but by means of an invalid carriage they were able to bring him home.[1]

The eighteen months of life which remained to

[1] One other fact may be noted for the benefit of those interested in the phenomena of illness. Though Dr. Tunnicliffe, the London specialist alluded to, described his recovery as "little short of a miracle," he himself was convinced all through, and more than once assured his family, that he was not going to die. "I felt there was life still in me," he said afterwards. In what proved really his last illness, it was otherwise. Though the symptoms were at first less alarming, he felt and said that life was slipping away.

him after his return seem to form a chapter by themselves. This illness marks the close of his working days. Those months, which to the friends near him seemed among the most beautiful and certainly not the least happy of his life, were an evening of recollection, possession, and repose.

There was no sudden change in his habits. After he had got over the fatigues of the journey his strength improved, until he seemed to stand nearly where he had stood before his illness. But the eczema, which for a time had quite disappeared, returned with his returning strength in a worse form than before, and thenceforward he was never free from it. It was not acutely painful, but it was exhausting and very disabling. When each attack was at its worst, he was compelled to lie almost flat, unable to raise himself, unable, owing to the bandages on his hands, even to feed himself. Then he would slowly improve, until he was able to move freely and walk about a little. Then would come the next attack. It was difficult to say whether his incurable hopefulness was a boon or not. At each temporary improvement he was certain that he had vanquished his enemy this time, and the disappointment was the greater when it reappeared. But he seldom allowed himself to complain, and took comfort in the assurance of his doctors, that the malady was a safety-valve, which probably saved him from worse things. Independent in personal

matters as he had always been, accustomed to a life of almost incessant activity, he submitted to the disabilities of his condition with entire simplicity and without an effort to kick against the pricks. Fortunately he had always been used to dictating his letters to a secretary, and to rely a good deal on his wife's help in the composition of speeches and important letters, and thus he was able even when in bed to get through slowly a good deal of correspondence.

Upon nursing matters and upon matters connected with the Universities, both of Liverpool and of Wales, his advice was still often sought, and his letters on these subjects still showed all their old practical sagacity. On his recovery from his illness he had resigned his presidency of the College of North Wales in a letter on which he bestowed great pains, wishing it to be a sort of declaration of faith in regard to Welsh education. His Guardianship of the Poor he never to the end could bring himself to resign, always clinging to the hope that he might shake off his malady sufficiently to attend the Relief Quorum once more. This hope was never realised, but he accomplished one result more valuable than his occasional presence could have been. The Guardians of the West Derby Board and of the Toxteth Board consented, at his suggestion, to adopt a system similar to that which he had introduced into the parish of

Liverpool twenty-seven years before, of co-operation with the Central Relief Society, passing on to that Society all their first applications from respectable people in temporary distress, in order that they might be more adequately helped and saved from the stigma of pauperism. The open-air cure for consumption was his latest hobby, and he took a keen interest in the arrangements for two new Sanatoria that were in process of being founded : one in Delamere Forest, for patients who could afford to pay part of the cost of treatment ; one at Heswell for pauper patients.

When other work failed, he dictated fragmentary reminiscences of his life and of people he had known, or memoranda upon the principles which he held of most importance in business or in some of his public activities. He had thrown aside almost entirely the sense of personal responsibility for these things. His work was done. But it seemed a necessity of his nature to have some holiday task on hand which might possibly be of use to some one. Had he only sought occupation, reading would have given him all he wanted, for his interest in books of the kind that suited him was even more vivid and all-absorbing than it had always been. From the time of his illness at Invergloy, it became the custom for the members of his family to read to him in bed for the last hour and a half before he settled for the night.

In this reading he took the kind of almost exuberant delight that a child takes in the one great treat of its day. The reader for the night would find him in a shadowy room, the light falling brightly only on the flaming mass of flowers that was always by his bedside; the figure on the bed lying propped with pillows; the small, brilliant, brown eyes, that were the life of the whole face, shining through the dusk with anticipated pleasure.

In the choice of books he was critical. During the weakness of convalescence old-fashioned fiction seemed to suit him best. Sir Walter Scott's novels, Mrs. Gaskell's, some of the earlier stories of Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, better written and less sentimental than *Uncle Tom's Cabin*,—were found exciting enough to make the moment of leaving off almost too difficult. Nothing pleased him that was not direct, simple, and forcible, both in manner and matter. George Eliot he thought pompous and affected. Anything that savoured of irony and cynicism was repulsive to him, and to have read him a book that "ended badly" would have been an impossible cruelty: he was too ingenuous a novel reader to have become hardened to imaginary griefs. Humorous books usually bored him; but there were odd exceptions. Over *David Harum* he laughed till he cried. As he grew stronger, he got tired of novels,

and developed a great appetite for biography. A good many lives of people he had known were read to him, and he enjoyed the pleasures of reminiscence. Better even than these he liked *Up from Slavery*, the autobiography of the negro, Booker Washington. But of all the books read to him during these last months, the one that impressed him most was the *Life of Dr. Dale of Birmingham*, by his son, Mr. A. W. Dale, the Vice-Chancellor of Liverpool University. To the whole of this thick and closely written volume, much of it treating in considerable detail of the internal affairs of a denomination and of a city not his own, he listened with an almost breathless interest. It was evidently the personality of Dr. Dale that so attracted him, and perhaps the reason is not difficult to guess. Most men whom he admired satisfied only one side of his nature. They might have, as he had, the driving power of the practical man who knows exactly how much under given circumstances he can get out of himself and others, and is able to put things through ; or they might have, as he had, the idealism which is the expression of a definite religious faith and of a hidden, fervent spiritual life. In Dr. Dale he found both these things combined. As one who knew both men well said of them : they were alike in this, that few men have held St. Paul so fast by one hand, and St. James so fast by the other. Dr. Dale's

sermons formed the favourite Sunday reading for William Rathbone for the rest of his life.

One type of book that seemed at first sight suitable had to be carefully eschewed. He could not endure anything that reminded him too forcibly of the work that remained to be done in his own subjects, and that he could no longer hope to do. His daughter once began reading him *Men of the Merchant Service*, by Charles Bullen. The picturesqueness and charm of Bullen's descriptions of sea-life, their healthy tone and simple piety, usually delighted him. But this book is full of suggestions of evils and defects that call for remedy in the conditions of the Service. As a former shipowner, and as one interested in mercantile law, all the suggestions struck him as so many personal appeals. After a few pages he stopped the reader with uncontrollable impatience: "What is the use of reading me that! What can I do, lying here?" He showed the same feeling when asked to criticise some investigations that were being made with regard to the conditions of labour at the docks. Of all the problems presented to him by Liverpool life, that was the one with which he would most have liked to grapple. Now it was too late, and though he gave the opinion asked for, he shrank from the whole subject with unmistakable pain. Of the world's "inexhaustible patience of abuses that only tor-

ment others" he had always only a meagre stock, and now that he could no longer put on his armour, he preferred to keep altogether out of hearing of the fray.

When able to go out, exercise and sunshine and flowers made him perfectly happy. The summer of 1901 was certainly a very fine one, and the foliage better than usual. But he, who had never had so much leisure to think of the weather or to observe the trees, thought both extraordinarily good. His son-in-law gave him a little invalid carriage, so contrived that it could be either pushed or pulled, and he could either sit or lie. In this, or very rarely on foot, he explored every corner of his garden, and learnt to know every shrub and flower. Whenever he was well enough, the carriage was harnessed to a shaggy little Exmoor pony, and he took a daily drive in Sefton Park. He grew very fond of the park and very proud of its beauties. He liked to watch the football players, and the bicyclists, and the children at their games. Of course his little carriage, especially when he lay in it at full length, attracted many curious looks. But he never seemed to notice this, or if he did, it certainly did not trouble him. A friend, greatly attached to him, who met him on one of these walks said afterwards, that he found the sight of his entire helplessness so painful that he could hardly keep his composure.

It was impossible for any one who lived with him to feel this. It was impossible not to be infected with enough of his simplicity to feel that failing strength was natural to great age, and that there was no humiliation in suffering the common lot of humanity.

He talked frequently of his own death, nearly always in a tone unaffectedly matter of fact. He did not expect that it would be long deferred, and as the autumn advanced it became clear that his strength was failing. A severe winter succeeded the beautiful summer, and he felt much the confinement to the house, though he did his best to relieve the monotony and obey the doctor's orders to take exercise, by tramping from room to room, examining the pictures and ornaments in each as though it were a museum. All his life he had treated his own house as a laboratory or an office; now he was realising the possessions that had been insensibly accumulating round him. On Christmas Day he was able to enjoy for the last time a large family gathering. After that he seldom left his bed, and as January wore on he grew increasingly weak. February 6 was his fortieth wedding-day. "What a long life, and, on the whole, what a happy one!" he said, as he lay gazing at the flowers with which his room was filled, and drinking in their colour with the old fervid delight. On February 11, his eighty-third

birthday, painful symptoms set in, and in a few days it became evident that the power of absorbing nutrition had entirely ceased. Every one thought that the end was very near ; but a flame that burns so strongly is not easily extinguished. He had always had a great dread lest a body so strong as his should survive the mind. This trial he was completely spared, for it was the other way. The strength of heart and brain, said the doctors, alone kept life in him. As long as weakness permitted him to speak he seemed clear and conscious. One night he appeared very anxious to say something, but the only words audible were : "Never, never, anything but kindness and generosity from all my friends." Afterwards he lay in entire speechless exhaustion, until on the evening of March 6 he passed quietly away.

All his affairs had long been set in perfect order, and among his papers were found some directions concerning his funeral, as characteristic as anything that had come from him in life. Believing "that the burial of a large number of persons in the midst of populous districts was endangering the public health," he directed that his body should be cremated. Everything was to be done as simply and inexpensively as was possible without singularity. None of his friends were to attend his funeral at any risk to their health, or to uncover their heads in the open air. The paper

ended : "These are my feelings, but I do not wish to fetter or annoy survivors."

His wishes were obeyed, and in the presence of a great concourse of his fellow-citizens, and of his kinsmen and friends from far and near, his ashes were laid to rest in the same grave in Toxteth Cemetery in which the bodies of his parents and his first wife were buried. Among the masses of beautiful flowers that surrounded the grave and almost covered the alabaster casket, lay one wreath from his veteran friend, Miss Florence Nightingale, bearing the inscription, "In remembrance and humblest love of one of God's best and greatest sons."

Among scattered memoranda dictated by William Rathbone during the last year of his life, was found the following fragment :

The retrospect of over eighty years, of which over sixty have been spent in very varied and active occupation, and during which I have been brought into contact with every rank of our people, both at home and through correspondence with the most distant and varied parts of the world, seems to afford some points of experience and observation which may be of interest, at any rate, to my own family and friends, and possibly of use to some outside that circle.

I cannot point to anything very new in that experience, but the results which I have found to follow from

principles and modes of action which are open to very many, seem to me very encouraging to those who—like myself—have no claim to genius or brilliancy.

What strikes me most in the retrospect is the utter disproportion between the outcome and rewards of the work of that long period, and the efforts and sacrifices which it called for.

It is a very common observation that those great men who have been the first to discover natural laws, and formulate principles to which the world owes most, have rarely been those to make the practically beneficial application of their discoveries, and have still more rarely themselves received material advantages from them. They do not thereby lose their reward, because the joy and delight of tracking out a great new truth, and at last seeing it unfold before their eyes, must be something which ordinary mortals cannot share in, nor even comprehend. But the men who reap an immediate and material reward for their work are not these great discoverers and brilliant men of genius, but rather those ordinary men whose quick, careful observation, common sense, and industry just place them a few days, months, or years in advance of what is becoming the general knowledge or sentiment. It is these who see what part of the ideas of the thinkers and specialists of the day are capable of immediate, practical application to the circumstances of their time and country, and who put them into execution. And so long as they are careful not to appropriate the credit unduly and selfishly, but insist that both the originators and those who have worked with them in the development shall get their primary and predominant share of praise and reward, their work benefits alike themselves, the men of genius, and the world.

I say this, both because I want to show the injustice and undesirableness of piling on one individual the credit of achievements in which many have been connected, and because I think that if more people realised how considerable and widespread are the results which are often attainable by the use of these qualities of observation, common sense, and industry, they would be inspired with faith and energy to attempt public work which they now believe to require much rarer qualities, and therefore modestly consider to be beyond their power.

In short, if I were to venture to express what seems to me the lesson of my own life by an adapted proverb, I should say, "Great are the uses of mediocrity."

For this estimate of William Rathbone I must disclaim all responsibility. Those who have read this Memoir can judge for themselves how far he should be taken at his own valuation. The fragment is inserted, partly because it is so characteristic; partly because it expresses in his own words the only motive which would have reconciled him to the notion of his Life being written, however briefly, for publication: the hope that it might encourage others, especially young men and women in his own city, to trace out for themselves more definitely, and to follow more boldly, a career of public usefulness.

NOTE

AMONG the published writings of Mr. Rathbone alluded to in this volume are the following:—

Social Duties. Macmillan and Co. 1867.

Increased Earnings of the Working Classes. Benson and Holme. 1877.

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